



Jordan Times

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King sends cable to King Fahd
 AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein on Friday sent a cable to Saudi King Fahd Ben Abdul Aziz congratulating him on the 16th anniversary of his assumption of power. King Hussein wished King Fahd good health and a happy life and the Saudi people further progress and development.

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Anani: King proposed to Clinton launch of direct talks with Iraq

Hopefully (Turkey's) initiative will turn into neighbour's forum — Cem

By Tareq Ayyoub
 Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein has proposed to President Bill Clinton that the U.S. start direct dialogue with Iraq to end differences between the two countries, a senior minister said Friday.

"His Majesty had touched upon that idea in his [telephone] conversation with President Clinton," following the success of the U.N. secretary general's mission in Baghdad, Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani said during a joint press conference with Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem.

"There was no refusal [on the part of President Clinton] but the idea is still being developed," Dr. Anani, who is also foreign minister, said.

"We believe that His Majesty's initiative will eventually win the day because it is the way to resolve the Iraqi problem once and for all," the minister added.

Jordan and Turkey support the lifting of U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq, Dr. Anani said.

He said that the two sides have agreed that Iraq



Deputy Prime Minister Jawad Anani and Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem addressing reporters at a press conference in Amman on Friday. (Photo by Yusef Allan)

should fully comply with the U.N. Security Council resolutions, "but we also agreed that if Iraq complies, there should be a light at the end of the tunnel."

"The light at the end of the tunnel means that Iraq should witness a lifting of the sanctions... Iraq should also gradually be integrated into the region and become an important and integral party," the minister added.

Dr. Anani called for a "mechanism" to measure Iraq's compliance with the recent agreement between

Baghdad and the U.N. over the U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq.

"The Americans are going to keep their forces in the region for some time until they are sure that Iraq is complying with the U.N. resolutions. But how do we measure whether Iraq is in compliance or not?" the minister asked.

"The U.S. wants the Security Council to issue a resolution that gives them the automatic ability to strike Iraq in the name of the U.N.," he said.

But "the world community does not believe in that [method]. There must be a clear-cut criteria, and an objective party which will determine whether there was a breach of the U.N. resolutions or not," Dr. Anani said.

The minister was referring to debate in the Security Council in which the U.S. insists on obtaining U.N. authorisation to launch a military strike on Iraq if Baghdad blocks U.N. inspection teams.

The minister welcomed a Turkish initiative aimed at enhancing Baghdad's ties with its neighbours in order to pave the way for a gradual lifting of the seven-year-old U.N. sanctions.

The initiative, submitted to the Iraqi side during Mr. Cem's Feb. 4 visit to Baghdad, calls for regional security that involves Iraq and for confidence and security building measures.

The initiative also calls for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery system in the region, efforts to lift the sanctions and a sequential

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Ma'an curfew ends today

None of rioters were motivated by political affiliation — Police

By Tareq Ayyoub
 Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The six-day curfew imposed on the southern city of Ma'an following the unrest that erupted in the town last week will be lifted today.

Colonel Bashir Majali, Ma'an's police director, said that army units have started to pull out from the town on Friday evening.

"We lifted the curfew for six hours on Friday to allow people to go for prayers and buy necessities," Col. Majali told the Jordan Times by telephone from Ma'an.

"By Friday night, all soldiers who have been deployed in the town would have left and life will return to normal by Saturday morning," the security official said.

Ma'an, a home for more than 30,000 inhabitants, was placed under the curfew following the unrest that erupted after the death of a 22-year-old Mohammad Abdullah Al Katch during a pro-Iraq rally.

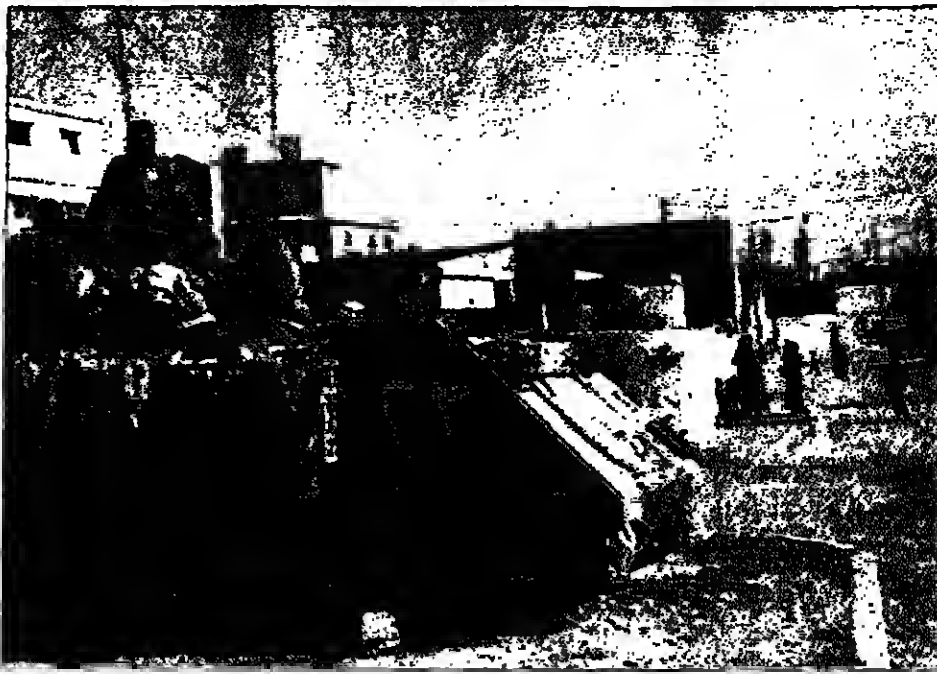
Police and demonstrators clashed and fired on each other during the two-day riots, in which more than 20 people were injured.

The government blames president of the Engineers Association, Leith Shbeilat, for instigating the riots.

All telephone links to the town were cut. Visitors and journalists were banned from entering the town.

More than 50 teams searched for illegal weapons and suspects allegedly involved in the unrest.

Col. Majali said that the



An army armoured vehicle mans a checkpoint at a main street in Ma'an. The government announced it will lift the week-long curfew on Saturday and officials say they expect life to have returned to normal by then to the city (Reuters photo)

search units seized more than 460 pieces of weapons of different types, "ranging from small guns to Kalashnikovs, automatic machine guns and large quantities of ammunition magazines."

A 0.5 inch machine gun, which was reportedly used by the civilians during the unrest, was not located, he said.

Col. Majali said that about 50 people were arrested, "while around 30 [wounded] remained at large."

"The detainees will be interrogated by the prosecutor general of the Security Court before being sent to the court for trial for taking part in the riots," Col. Majali added.

"Some of those who took part in the riots were unemployed, others were drug

addicts and a few were on the wanted list of police," added the Colonel.

"None of them was motivated by political affiliation," the official said.

Col. Majali said that heroin, hashish and other types of drugs were seized during the search.

He added that more than 3,000 Artime tablets, looted from Ma'an hospital when angry civilians stormed it, were also retrieved.

Col. Majali said that the situation was calm on Friday following the Friday prayers.

A civil defence official

said that during the six-day curfew, more than 75 children and old people were given first aid. Three birth cases were registered in the town, he added.

The official said that authorities started cleaning debris, burned tyres and rocks that were scattering in the streets of the town.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali met with Ma'an deputies and senators who asked him to lift the curfew.

Meanwhile, police have released two persons who accompanied Mr. Shbeilat to Ma'an a few hours before the riots started.

Security sources said that Majed Majali, a blind poet, and Shadi Mikhael, a Swileh were released following five days in detention.

Security Council continues debate over resolution on Annan-Aziz pact

Agreement unlikely to be tested for at least 10 days — diplomats

Combined agency dispatches

THE AGREEMENT between the United Nations and Iraq opening up presidential suits to inspection is unlikely to be put to the test for at least 10 days, diplomats said in Baghdad Friday.

U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin said Wednesday that Washington wanted the agreement inspection of presidential sites tested "as soon as possible."

But it will take at least 10 days until the "special group" charged with carrying out the inspections is ready, the diplomats said.

The 15 members of the U.N. Security Council were due to hold further discussions Friday on a resolution endorsing the agreement signed here on Monday by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Diplomats say those dis-

cussions are likely to go on until early next week because of British and U.S. insistence on giving the agreement teeth by authorising U.S.-led military action without further reference to the Security Council.

China, France and Russia are vehemently opposed to any such move. U.S. calls for a so-called "material breach" clause explicitly authorising military action have been dropped from a British draft resolution.

But diplomats here say London and Washington still want a reference to a U.N. Security Council resolution adopted during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis which would have the same effect as a "material breach" clause.

French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine on Friday warned Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that he would

Iraq says U.S. making Kuwaiti prisoners new pretext to keep embargo

BAGHDAD (AFP) — An Iraqi official on Friday said the United States was now trying to prolong U.N. economic sanctions by accusing the government here of detaining Kuwaitis since the 1991 Gulf war.

"The allegations spread by the U.S. administration on the presence of Kuwaiti prisoners of war in Iraq is aimed at prolonging the embargo on Iraq," an information ministry spokesman told

the official INA news agency. "The U.S. government is trying to make the world believe that maintaining the embargo is justified and is looking for another pretext after allegations about the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq have almost been refuted," he said.

Iraq and the United Nations here Monday signed an agreement

(Continued on page 3)

run out of support if he sparked another crisis with the United Nations over weapons inspections.

"It would be really cata-

Euro-MPs duck massacre, human rights questions in Algeria

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Europe should steer clear of publicly asking who is behind Algeria's massacres or taking part in any international human rights inquiry in the country, a report by nine Euro-MPs said Friday.

The authors of the report, who visited Algiers on a four-day fact-finding mission two weeks ago, gave the document to European Parliament Speaker Jose Gil-Robles late Thursday.

"The main question 'Who is killing whom?' is seen as indecent in Algeria," the report said, adding that none of the delegation's members had any doubt during their trip that armed Islamist groups were responsible for Algeria's massacres.

It also said the fact that Algeria's parliament had been democratically elected "cuts short any speculation about the creation of an international commission of inquiry."

However, it continued, that "does not mean that the question of human rights is not raised in Algeria," but simply that "it is a theme that must be closely examined in a parliamentary and interparliamentary framework."

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Hizbollah fighter killed, 4 Israelis wounded in southern Lebanon

SIDON (AFP) — Israeli warplanes and artillery pounded Hizbollah positions in southern Lebanon on Friday after heavy fighting which left one Hizbollah militiaman dead and four Israeli soldiers wounded.

An Israeli army spokesman in Jerusalem said a Hizbollah guerrilla was killed and four Israeli soldiers wounded, one seriously, in a fire-fight in the western sector of the self-declared Israeli "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

The spokesman said Israeli troops intervened after Hizbollah fighters tried to seize a position held by the Israeli proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), at Razlan.

Hizbollah guerrillas fired mortars and rockets at the Israeli soldiers, the spokesman said.

A spokesman for Islamic Resistance, Hizbollah's military wing, said its fighters had launched an attack with automatic weapons and anti-tank rockets on an Israeli post at Bir Kallab, near the central sector of the buffer zone.

The Hizbollah spokesman said the guerrillas briefly occupied the Israeli position, and delayed reinforcements by destroying an

armoured vehicle with a rocket-propelled grenade.

"Our fighters blew up several fortifications, planted the Resistance flag on the position and then abandoned it, leaving behind a large number of dead and wounded Israeli soldiers," the Hizbollah spokesman said.

Hizbollah fighters also attacked five nearby Israeli positions and two posts at the edge of the western sector of the border zone where three Israeli soldiers were killed and three wounded in similar attacks on Thursday.

Two anti-Israeli guerrillas were also killed Thursday in a clash with Israeli troops, also in the western part of the buffer zone, sources close to the Israeli army said.

Israeli warplanes and artillery pounded suspected Hizbollah positions following Friday's attacks by the Islamist group.

Israeli fighter-bombers fired six missiles on the Iqlim Al Tuffah hills, a Hizbollah stronghold some 15 kilometres east of Sidon, the main city in southern Lebanon, security sources said.

Hizbollah fighters and Lebanese army anti-aircraft batteries opened fire

on the planes and Hizbollah guerrillas fired five SAM-7 ground-to-air missiles at the swooping jets, they said.

An Israeli army spokesman confirmed that Israeli planes had carried out raids on Friday and said the planes had "attacked terrorist targets" and returned safely to base.

Israeli troops and SLA militiamen also pounded the Iqlim Al Tuffah range with heavy artillery fire, Lebanese police said.

More than 150 shells of different calibres fell on the Iqlim Al Tuffah in the space of one hour while Hizbollah guerrillas fired about 60 mortars into the occupied border zone, they said.

Israeli army helicopters also strafed the area with heavy machine-guns.

Four Israeli soldiers have been killed and 32 injured in attacks claimed by Hizbollah in southern Lebanon since the beginning of the year. Seven Hizbollah fighters have been killed this year.

Hizbollah spearheads a guerrilla war to force Israel to withdraw from the buffer zone established by Israel in southern Lebanon in 1985 to guard against cross-border attacks.

Mossad agents made noise, alerted neighbours in botched bugging operation in Switzerland

Combined agency dispatches

THE MOSSAD agents who bungled the bugging of a suspected Islamist in a six-storey apartment block in a Bern suburb had made so much noise that they awoke another tenant who alerted the police, Israeli newspapers said Friday.

Three men and two women were detained by Swiss police after the bungled break-in, but four were freed shortly afterwards — to the chagrin of Swiss prosecutors — because the two officers at the scene couldn't find anything suspicious. A fifth agent, who was caught with the bag of the wire-tapping equip-

ment, was held. The botched Feb. 19 operation is the latest in a series of foul-ups that have tainted the reputation of the secret service that once instilled dread and admiration for its daring missions.

Israel has apologised in writing to Switzerland following the arrest of a Mossad agent during an undercover operation in Bern a week ago, officials said Friday.

The letter of apology was addressed to Swiss President Flavio Cotti from Foreign Minister Director-General Eytan Ben-Tsur, the ministry's spokesman Aviv Shir-On said.

It was transmitted to the Swiss authorities by Israel's ambassador in Bern, Yitzhak Meir.

Mr. Cotti said Friday that Israel's formal apology over the botched bugging operation in Bern was a positive step.

The target of the bugging operation was a six-storey house in the Bern suburb of Liebefeld, which had two tenants with Arab names — Abdullah Al Zein and his European wife on the third floor and the Bouchoucha family on the sixth floor. Neighbours told the Yediot Ahronot daily that the Bouchouchas had lived in the building for many years. Mr. Al Zein had frequent visitors, they said.

Israel Radio and Yediot said Friday that the

Mossad's target was a member of Hizbollah in Lebanon. The man had ties to Iranian intelligence, the radio said.

Swiss TV has said the secret agents were after a supporter of the Islamist Hamas, a Palestinian group that has carried out a series of suicide bombings in Israel.

On Feb. 19, at about 2:00 a.m., the five Mossad agents drove up to the apartment block in two cars, the Haaretz daily said.

One of the agents opened the glass entrance door, apparently with a key, and with two others went to

(Continued on page 3)

Danish MP wants toys for pigs

COPENHAGEN (R) — liberal MP seeking election to the Danish parliament has said the country's 11 million pigs should be given toys to play with in a bid to woo the growing environmental and animal rights lobby in a country where twice as many pigs as people, opposition Liberal Party's Mariann Boel has proposed a series of measures designed to improve the welfare of the animals, including using rubber balls to keep the active and animal waste facilities.

Niels Hjeltnes, a candidate for the Progress Party, said the step would be to give pig video cassettes and animal

Jackson lookalike fools London fashion crowd

LONDON (AFP) — Also dressed like U.S. superstar Michael Jackson, a crowd of London Fashion Week when a man, wearing a blue suit with the super star's mark hat and hair, walked in the front row to new season-through creations.

designer Julien Macdonald. Bob Jones, a spokesman for Michael Jackson Productions in New York said that the artist was not in London but on "personal business."

"I don't think he would be annoyed about it, in fact expect he will take it as most serious form of flattery," Jones said.

Widow to run in Japanese by-election to clear lawmaker's name

TOKYO (AFP) — The widow of Shigeru Arai, Japanese lawmaker who hanged himself last week, announced Wednesday she will run for election to a seat in a fight to clear his name. "The family name," she said, "will start my own battle."

will start my own battle. Arai's wife, who was 45, said she will try to get him back to his voice.

Family despair over screaming son

LONDON (AFP) — British doctors are stumped in case of a three-year-old boy whose inability to speak without screaming has baffled his entire family — with the exception of a kind-hearted granny — in a desperate bid to find a cure.

Tom Coward, who has a problem with his own hearing, shouts so loudly and often that he has developed nodules on his vocal cords. So far, doctors have been unable to find a medical reason for Tom's condition.

With the patience of a saint, Tom's family have now developed a network of doctors to try and get him to speak.

Iraqi minister says Saddam wants to send envoy to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait

CAIRO (AFP) — Iraqi Justice Minister Shabib Al Malaky said Iraq recently told Kuwait and Saudi Arabia it wanted to send an envoy to discuss a reconciliation, the weekly Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram said Friday.

Mr. Malaky said the message was passed on to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia via the Arab League.

In the message, Iraq said it was "ready to send a special envoy immediately from President Saddam Hussein to the two countries to discuss the possibility of turning the page in their relations (with Baghdad) and overcoming past bitterness," he said.

The Arab League Friday has not confirmed the information.

Mr. Malaky said President Hussein had chosen him as the emissary.

The Iraqi justice minister said Saudi Arabia still has not agreed to the visit while Kuwait "still opposes" any contact with Iraq.

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, triggering a complete break in relations between Iraq and the Gulf monarchies, including Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Malaky praised Saudi Arabia's position in the recent U.N. disarmament crisis in Iraq, especially "Riyadh's announcement of its opposition to its territory being used by Washington for carrying out a military strike against Iraq."

Syrian president hails Russian involvement in Middle East

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian President Hafez Assad on Thursday welcomed Russia's contribution to solving the Middle East conflict in line with U.N. resolutions, SANA news agency reported.

After meeting the speaker of the Russian Duma, Gennady Seleznyov, Mr. Assad said he was happy to see that Russia was again ready to "play its part in settling the problems in the region, on the basis of international law."

SANA said Mr. Seleznyov was convinced that President Assad would be successful in "overcoming obstacles on the road to peace, thanks to his wisdom and experience."

After meeting Mr. Assad, Mr. Seleznyov called on Washington to withdraw its forces from the Gulf.

"The American forces no longer have any reason to stay in the region," he told a press conference, as he wrapped up his visit here.

"Their intensive presence could hinder the peace process and the United States should withdraw them," he said.

Mr. Seleznyov added that Russia and Syria want to see the "application of U.N. resolutions concerning settlement" of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

He also said that "Syria wants to develop its relations with Russia" and that Moscow is preparing for a more active role in the Middle East.

16 police injured in attack on Istanbul station

ANKARA (AFP) — Assaults using guns and grenades attacked an Istanbul police station Friday, injuring 16 police, the Anatolia news agency said.

The attack occurred in the Gaziosmanpasa district of the city. Security forces launched a dragnet for the attackers, who witnesses said fled on foot.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility. But the NTV television network said the authorities did not rule out the Kurdish Labour Party, a separatist rebel army fighting for an independent homeland since 1984.

Its leader, Abdullah Ocalan, has repeatedly threatened to stage attacks outside its traditional battleground in southeast Turkey.

But the authorities also did not rule out the possibility that Dev-Sol, a far-left urban guerrilla group, was behind Friday's attack. Dev-Sol is known for this kind of attack and is active in Gaziosmanpasa, a poor neighbourhood.

The attackers opened fire first, drawing return fire from police. They then hurled two grenades which exploded, injuring 16 people, Anatolia said.

None of the 16 were seriously hurt, hospital officials said.

They then hurled two grenades which exploded, injuring 16 people, Anatolia said.

Netanyahu to talk Mideast peace on European tour

MADRID (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is to make a whirlwind tour of several European capitals next week to discuss the stalled Middle East peace process.

According to government officials in the various countries, the premier is to travel to Madrid, Bonn and Oslo.

Spain's Foreign Ministry said Mr. Netanyahu will meet King Juan Carlos, Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar and Foreign Minister Abel Matutes when he arrives in Madrid for a 24-hour visit next Thursday.

The last time the Israeli leader went to Spain was in December 1996. Madrid was the venue for a Middle East peace conference in October 1991.

After Spain Mr. Netanyahu will stop over Friday in Bonn, where he will discuss the peace process and bilateral ties with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Mr. Netanyahu last met Mr. Kohl in Bonn in December. Later Friday he will head to the Norwegian capital Oslo, which hosted the first secret meetings between Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organ-

sation (PLO) officials that resulted in the Israeli-Palestinian autonomy accord of 1993.

There, he will meet Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik and Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek.

Iranian cleric says Israel has chemical weapons

TEHRAN (R) — A senior Iranian cleric on Friday said arch-foe Israel was developing biological and chemical weapons "to set the region on fire."

Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, head of Iran's judiciary, told a weekly Friday prayer meeting at Tehran University that Israel was developing weapons of mass destruction on the Golan Heights.

"Israel is now making chemical and biological weapons in the tunnels on the Golan Heights... [Israel] is threatening the whole of humanity," said Ayatollah Yazdi.

The crowd responded to the sermon by shouting "Death to Israel."

Ayatollah Yazdi also hammered the United States for supplying Israel with military equipment.

"America will have the same problem with Israel as it had with Iraq in the future because they have been arming Israel for years," the judicial head said.

Iran is against the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in the region and opposes any form of war, Ayatollah Yazdi said.

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TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER: An Iraqi tries to sell an armchair Friday at a street auction in Baghdad. The U.N. Security Council was set to convene today in a bid to resolve differences over a proposed resolution warning Iraq that failure to comply with an accord on weapons inspections would have serious consequences (AFP photo)

Talks with Turkey 'dead end' — Greek premier

ATHENS (AP) — Greece's premier firmly slammed the door Thursday on Turkish proposals for comprehensive talks on territorial issues and other disputes, insisting they must work slowly from the present "dangerous point."

"The problems we face with Turkey are caused by Ankara's unacceptable demands and pressures," Premier Costas Simitis said during a discussion on foreign policy in parliament.

The Greek government has made clear that the country's sovereign rights will not be discussed under any circumstances," he added. "Nor is the idea acceptable of a comprehensive political negotiation which Ankara is aiming for."

Turkey earlier this month proposed the two countries' foreign ministers meet before the end of March for discussions on long-standing problems, including control of the Aegean's air space and waters, seabed mineral rights and Cyprus, whose northern third has been occupied by Turkey since 1974 following an abortive coup backed by Greece.

A Turkish government statement released Feb. 12 warned the "present tension... is likely to lead to an accident or a military confrontation."

Greece has consistently refused comprehensive negotiations on these issues, saying it will only discuss the continental shelf. It insists Turkey is free to refer the matters to the International Court of Justice at the Hague for arbitration if it wishes.

"A step-by-step approach... aims to pave the way for the improvement of Greek-Turkish relations from the dangerous point to which they have been brought," Mr. Simitis said.

Mr. Simitis said Greece remains "firm on our position that comprehensive negotiations would result in a dead end."

Relations between the two NATO neighbours took a turn for the worst in December, when a European Union (EU) summit meeting in Luxembourg ruled Turkey was not yet eligible to begin negotiations for entry into the 15-member bloc.

Outraged by its exclusion and the EU's pledge to begin entrance negotiations for Cyprus, Ankara threatened to boycott next month's European Union summit in London, to which it has been invited.

After Luxembourg, Turkey reacted spasmodically, intensifying the climate of aggression against us," Mr. Simitis told parliament. "What did it gain? Nothing... In safeguarding our sovereign rights, we refuse to adopt a policy of reticence."

The premier added that Ankara's current stance is the reason why Greece continues to block European funds earmarked for Turkey under a customs union agreement.

Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Yannis Kranidiotis warned Wednesday that Greece will block the entry of five east European countries into the EU if Cyprus is not also admitted.

Responding to criticism by the United States and Britain of the Cypriot government's decision to purchase Russian-made S-300 ground to air missiles, Mr. Simitis stressed that "Cyprus has every right to organise its defence and we support it unconditionally."

But he also expressed his support for Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides' call for the full demilitarisation of the island, saying Turkey's rejection of this proposal "is another sample of its intransigence."

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Jews, Muslims in Tunisia call for regular dialogue

TUNIS (AFP) — Representatives of the Islamic and Jewish faiths were due to wind up Friday a milestone first meeting in Tunisia devoted to the history and role of this country's Jewish community.

The participants in this Franco-Tunisian forum stressed the need for regular and structured dialogue between Muslims and Jews as a way of promoting peace in the Middle East and social integration of both groups.

The meeting brought together historians, intellectuals and religious activists from among Jews and Muslims.

Dali Jazi, Tunisia's minister for higher education, who helped to organise the meeting, urged Jews and Muslims to "break free from taboos" and make way for knowledge and scientific dialogue about the history of Tunisia in all its aspects.

"On the pretext of authenticity, this country has forgotten half of its history," he said, alluding to a presence of Judaism which was "continuous in time and broad in space."

Claude Nataf, chairman of the "Historical Society of Tunisian Jews," a co-organiser of the meeting, said there should be a "regular cycle" of inter-community meetings. Such a dialogue would shed light on "unknown chapters" of the history of the Jews in Tunisia and "transmit the memory" of this community to the younger generations, he said.

Mohammad Talbi, an academic and specialist on Islam, said Jews and Muslims should set up a "strong and well-publicised structure so as to work together for peace."

If such a structure existed, it could help "more easily to foster a settlement to the Middle East conflict," said Mr. Talbi who last March was awarded the Agnelli Foundation Prize for his commitment to religious freedom and human rights.

He said Muslims, Christians and Jews ought to pray together at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, West Bank, to encourage peace and counter "the germs of exclusion and hatred" which all religions contained and which gave rise to genocide.

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JORDAN TELEVISION	
PROGRAMME TWO	
16:10	The Hammerman
16:30	French Cartoon — Canon the Adventurer
17:00	French doc. — Cago
18:00	Square One TV
19:00	Le Journal
19:15	Science Magazine — The Discovering Magazine
19:30	News headlines
20:00	Cinema, Cinema
20:30	Prison
21:10	Drama — Time Trax
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature film: "The Double Jeopardy"
23:59	Comedy — "The Respected Family"
00:30	End of T.V.

PRAYER TIMES	
04:44	Fajr
06:01	(Sunrise) Dhuha
11:46	Dhuhr
15:03	'Asr
17:35	Maghreb
18:52	'Isha

CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church	Sweilfeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.	632785.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

St. Joseph Church Tel.	4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.	622366
Anglican Church Tel.	624853/624811.
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel.	771751.
Amman International Church Tel.	865897
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel.	5688404
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel.	811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	654932

Agaba	11/21
Deserts	04/16
Jordan Valley	10/20

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police 192	621111.
637777	
Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	5605800
Price Complaints	5661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	5661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111

NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Bassam Karadseh	4389200
Dr. Salman Daboubi	776751
Dr. Ramzi Mazzawi	894738
Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad	846070
Firas pharmacy	5661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Nairookh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
Najib pharmacy	847632
IRBID:	
Dr. Fawzi Abul Hija	252970
Al Quds pharmacy	—1
ZARQA:	
Dr. Samir Al Lawzi	989601

Khalifeh pharmacy	985417
Water Authority	5680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	44-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	44-53200

EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police 192	621111.
637777	
Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	5605800
Price Complaints	5661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	5661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111

HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn.	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mafhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine Shmeisani	5607071
Shmeisani Hospital	5669131
University Hospital	815845
Al-Musabir Hospital	5667279
The Islamic, Abdali	5666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali	5664164/6
Italian, Al-Mubajreen	777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775111/26
Army, Marka	891611/15

ARRIVALS	
Queen Alia Hospital	5602240/50
Amal Hospital	5674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery	865199
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital	(09)990990
IRBID:	
Princess Basma Hospital	(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital	(02)247100
AQABA:	
Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111

DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	
05:00	Aqaba (add) (RJ)
06:30	Beirut (RJ)
12:00	Frankfurt (RJ)

Agriculture minister returns from Sudan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Agriculture Mijhem Khreisha on Friday said he and Sudanese agriculture officials discussed bilateral cooperation in the field of livestock and the exchange of farm products.

Speaking after his return from a two-day visit to Khartoum, Mr. Khreisha described his talks on bolstering bilateral cooperation between the two countries as fruitful and successful.

During his visit, Mr. Khreisha met with Sudanese Minister of Foreign Trade Othman Hadi and discussed

bilateral economic relations and means of boosting them further. He said means of activating a trade protocol agreement signed last September were also reviewed.

According to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Khreisha Wednesday signed an agricultural agreement with his Sudanese counter-

part Nafee' Ali Nafee'.

According to Petra, the agreement stipulates that the Sudanese government will allocate 50,000 acres of agricultural lands on which Jordan will plant crops, particularly fodder and wheat, in addition to raising livestock to make up for the Kingdom's needs.

Narcotics department announces four-month operations figures

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Anti-Narcotics Department arrested 249 suspects in 199 drug-related cases between Oct. 27, 1997 and Feb. 28, 1998, according to department Director Nazih Shreideh.

Speaking at a press conference, Colonel Shreideh said 101 cases involved drug use or possession, while 48 cases involved drug trafficking.

In all, the department seized 75 kilograms of hashish, five kilograms of heroin, 850 grammes of

opium and 8,342 pills, according to Col. Shreideh.

Perhaps the most significant among these cases, he said, involved two suspects of Turkish nationality who were caught while smuggling four kilograms of heroin.

He said the two Turks had concealed the drugs in a secret compartment of their private car but were apprehended just before the Eid Al Fitr feast upon entering Jordan.

Col. Shreideh said his

department solved 22 forgery cases, taking 31 suspects into custody. Most of the counterfeit cash was in U.S. dollars, he added.

According to Col. Shreideh, the department arrested two Russian students who smuggled \$93,000 from Syria and were trying to sell it with the help of two Jordanian students.

The department also foiled five attempts to smuggle artefacts out of the country, according to Col. Shreideh.

Development fund releases six-year statistics

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Employment and Development Fund (EDF) granted JD21.5 million to 5,630 projects since its establishment in 1991 through 1997, according to EDF sources.

The sources stated that the fund provided job opportunities for 11,500 persons throughout the Kingdom.

The fund was established to provide funds to projects in a bid to combat poverty and unemployment in the Kingdom, they said.

The EDF finances these projects through direct loans to citizens and loans through charitable organisations in all 12 governorates.

These projects include the services, industrial, tourism and handicraft sectors, according to the sources.

They said the fund is currently adopting a new strategy that hinges on activating the EDF's programmes in extending loans and expanding its activities to include financing projects benefiting women.

In 1997, the fund financed 860 projects through JD3.5 million in loans granted to 1,649 citizens.

Ministry planning committee reviews problems facing vocational education

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The planning committee at the Ministry of Education recently discussed issues facing vocational education in public schools, focusing on problems related to instructors, curricula, and equipment.

As for instructors, some papers presented at the meeting proposed upgrading the efficiency, proficiency and skills of instructors in order to help students acquire satis-

factory skills to enter the labour market and improve their standard of living. Several papers noted that some schools lack qualified teachers and instructors in vocational training.

On the issue of curricula, some papers called for an overhaul and the introduction of subjects that are more adapted to the requirements of comprehensive development in the Kingdom.

Textbooks for vocational trade training from grades one through seven should be

re-examined with a view to including new forms of knowledge to take the current generation into the 21st century, adapting to the needs of the labour market, and meeting the basic needs of the population," said one paper.

A number of papers tackled the issue of appropriate equipment in schools.

"Schools have to be equipped with suitable instruments in order to train our students and upgrade their level of education," one paper noted.

what's going on

EXHIBITIONS

• "The Spanish Contemporary Graphic Art" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman (Tel. 610858), until March 5.

• Private collection of Mamdouh Bisharat entitled "A Vision, An Identity" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until March 5 (Tel. 643251). Also displaying works by contemporary Arab artists — "The New Collection."

Security Council continues debate over resolution on Annan-Aziz pact

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Vedrine said in an interview with newspaper Liberation.

"In that case we would no longer find any support."

But mixing his hawkish language with a more moderate line, Mr. Vedrine insisted that France would not back calls for a U.N. resolution which would authorise automatic military strikes if Iraq breached the latest deal.

"To threaten Iraq with the most severe consequences if it doesn't play the game is normal but to go on and say there will be an automatic reaction, on the decision of who knows who, we could not accept," Mr. Vedrine was quoted as saying.

The Iraqi press Friday called on the Security Council to "firmly resist" British and U.S. pressure to "get round" the agreement.

"The United States and Britain are already trying to get round the agreement and the treacherous

Anglo-Saxons are starting to put around the idea of surrounding it with a U.N. Security Council resolution," said the Al Thawra daily.

"This treacherous idea is aimed at containing this agreement, engulfing its positive elements, reducing the margin of manoeuvre of the U.N. secretary general and casting doubt on his credibility," the paper said.

The U.N. chief Thursday postponed indefinitely talks he was due to hold in Washington Monday in order to be present in New York for the Security Council's deliberations.

Even after a Security Council vote, Mr. Annan will have to discuss the inspections procedures with the head of the U.N. Special Commission on Iraq's disarmament (UNSCOM), Richard Butler, and other U.N. officials, diplomats say.

Only then will Mr. Butler be able to travel to Baghdad for planned talks with Iraqi Deputy

Prime Minister Tareq Aziz.

Mr. Annan had said he expected Mr. Butler to visit Iraq as planned Monday but diplomats say they do not expect him to arrive before late next week.

Mr. Annan Thursday announced the appointment of Sri Lankan diplomat Jayantha Dhanapala to head the UNSCOM special group which the accord tasks with inspecting the eight presidential sites in the company of diplomats.

In Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told Congress that the U.N.-Iraq accord leaves the United States "in a better situation" than it was before.

If Iraq allows U.N. inspectors to do their jobs, the crisis will have ended, she said. On the other hand, if Baghdad violates the accord, "we will have more support for using other methods" including "military force," she said.

Ms. Albright stressed

that UNSCOM chief Richard Butler continues to be in charge of operations.

U.N. weapons inspectors were, meanwhile, carrying out normal inspections of other sites Friday, UNSCOM spokesman Alan Dacey said.

And nearly 60 U.N. staff who returned here Thursday after being pulled out at the height of the crisis were recovering from the 15-hour road journey from Amman before being briefed Saturday for a return to work the following day.

Asked whether the staff's arrival back marked a return to normality for the U.N.'s humanitarian work in Iraq, U.N. coordinator Denis Halliday said: "Absolutely."

Iraq says U.S. making Kuwaiti prisoners new pretext to keep embargo

(Continued from page 1)

calling for U.N. weapons experts to have complete and unfettered access in their search of Iraqi presidential sites.

It contains a clause Iraq hopes will pave the way toward ending the oil embargo, which under U.N. resolutions can only happen when Iraq satisfies the inspectors it has dismantled its banned weapons

programmes.

Kuwait said that around 600 people, almost all Kuwaitis, have been missing since Iraqi occupation troops were driven from Kuwait in the U.S.-led 1991 Gulf war. It believes they are still held in Iraq, which Baghdad denies. The State Department stressed Wednesday that the release of Kuwaiti prisoners in Iraq was one of the conditions for lifting the U.N. sanctions.

The emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, spoke Thursday over the telephone with U.S. President Bill Clinton, who recalled his nation's commitment to the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners and others still detained in Iraq.

Iraq earlier this month freed around 1,000 Arab prisoners, most of them held on criminal offences and none of whom have been reported missing from Kuwait.

U.K. contributes \$123,000 to implement UNDP social development programmes

AMMAN (Petra) — Britain has pledged to contribute \$123,000 toward the implementation of social development programmes in Jordan conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in accordance with an agreement signed at the British embassy in Amman on Thursday.

The UNDP, which is planning to publish a human resources development report in conjunction with the Ministry of Planning, expects costs to reach \$225,000.

The project, which will be carried out in three stages through the year 2000, aims at backing Jordan's efforts, particularly those of the Ministry of Social Development, to revamp the capability to build up personnel as part of improving social services.

Jorgen Lissner, UNDP resident representative in Jordan, and British Ambassador to Jordan Christopher Battiscombe signed the accord on the British contribution to the project.



British Ambassador Christopher Battiscombe (left) and UNDP Resident Representative Jorgen Lissner sign an agreement under which Britain will donate \$123,000 toward the implementation of social development programmes in the Kingdom (Petra photo)

Exhibition documents man's journey through the cultures of the Arab World

By Omar Karmi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — It is a strange mix: a modernist teacup next to a classical rendition of a tree; an ancient Roman stone lion under an Impressionist portrait; an antique copy of the Holy Bible next to an equally antique inscription from the Holy Koran.

It is strange, but not haphazard at the "Vision and Identity" exhibition at Darat Al Funun in Jabal Weibdeh. Every exhibit, from furniture to photograph, has its roots in Middle East culture, art and heritage, and each piece is part of Mamdouh Bisharat's impressive private collection.

Arranged into separate halls with different themes, the exhibition is one man's journey through the Arab World. This journey takes us from the Roman conquerors, through the first Orientalist explorers, up to the contemporary painters' quiet moments at Mukheibeh, just down from Um Qais, opposite the Golan Heights. It brings us from Egypt to Syria, from Jerusalem to Baghdad. It allows us to rest on traditional Jordanian hand-woven chairs, bathe in the waters of the Yarmouk River, witness some of the destruction of the 1967 war and cast a glance at the first ever edition of an Arabic newspaper.

Mr. Bisharat is adamant that this collection represents a way of life as well as an interest in art. His interest in art was stirred by his upbringing in Egypt where, as he put it, "who could fail to be inspired?" In his student days, rather than spending money in the coffee shops, his money was spent on books. For example, he bought Egypt and Nubia (1879), a massive two-volume work by the English Orientalist David Roberts, for five guineas. It is exhibited in the Arabian Hall amongst Damascus furniture and ancient inscriptions from the Holy Koran.

Money was never an issue for Mr. Bisharat in gathering his collection, because gathering was exactly what he did. He would trail the countryside in search of treasures, and often he would spot an ancient sculpture in a stone quarry or on a building site. It was in this way he found the ancient Roman stone sculpture of a lion's head, the only one of its kind so far found in Jordan, and one of only two known in the Middle East (there is one in Lebanon). Driving along the Dead Sea road, he noticed the sculpture built into the wall of a house. After finding the owner, he explained his interest and his willingness to buy the sculpture, only to be told that no payment was necessary as long as the wall would be rebuilt. The lion has a special significance in the exhibition, where it is positioned below a portrait of Mr. Bisharat by Princess Fahrend-nissa Zein that alludes to his nickname, Abu Shibel - father of the cub.

The only time Mr. Bisharat spent a significant amount of money on his collection, was upon his discovery of paintings by the Italian artist Luigi Mayer, now recognised as the first Orientalist. Although the National Gallery was given first option, their budget could not cover the purchase, and Mr. Bisharat ended up taking out a loan to acquire the paintings, now exhibited in the Jerusalem Room. This room also has an antique copy of the Holy Bible by Gelkie,



Art enthusiasts view one of the halls of the "Vision and Identity" exhibition at Darat Al Funun. The exhibition, displaying the collection of Mamdouh Bisharat, will run through March 5

Jerusalem tiles and other Christian artefacts.

"I collect beautiful things and beautiful people," this philosophy brought him into contact with the artistic community in Jordan — many of whom he ended up patronising — and visiting foreign artists, who would be invited to his farm at Mukheibeh. Here they could relax and express themselves in the rich and fertile land surrounding the Yarmouk River. Most of the paintings exhibited in the Contemporary Room are in fact presents by these artists, in appreciation of the effort and energy Mr. Bisharat has expended on behalf of the country's heritage. Hence the paintings by Ali Jabri, Nasser Abdul Aziz and Yasser Dawlat, and those of foreigners Rudolpho De Sanctis, Bruce Hollingworth and the Russian George Aleef, who later started the first art college in Jordan.

The family farm at Mukheibeh is an important factor in understanding the exhibition and the man. Rich and fertile, it symbolises nature undaunted and untainted. As Mr. Bisharat put it, "The best way to preserve nature is to leave it alone." A giant tree, planted by Mr. Bisharat in his boyhood, now stands four metres in diameter. In the 1967 conflict,

Mukheibeh was on the front line, and today the farm's ruined tower, hit by Israeli artillery fire, stands almost as a monument. The tree, the farm with its ruined tower, and the rich greens and mineral springs of the local surroundings can be experienced in the Mukheibeh Hall through photos by Anwar Khammash among others, sculptures, paintings, and locally made traditionally crafted furniture.

This "ecological" approach is also evident in the room documenting Um El Kundum, where the old family house, located near Airport Road, was restored in the traditional style by Mr. Bisharat with help from Anwar Khammash. It represents Mr. Bisharat's appreciation of traditional Jordanian heritage, which goes beyond art to lifestyle, and initiated a movement in Jordan to protect old houses and historic monuments. The house was opened in 1989 with an exhibition of Bani Hamida handicrafts.

The "Vision and Identity" exhibition was encouraged by Suha Shoman, a close friend of Mr. Bisharat, on the occasion of his 60th birthday. She also gave it its name — a vision of beauty encapsulated in a cultural identity.

The exhibition runs until March 5.

Mossad agents made noise, alerted neighbours in botched bugging operation in Switzerland

(Continued from page 1)

work to plant the sophisticated bugging device in the utilities box in the basement of the building. Two others waited outside as lookouts.

The agents made so much noise that a resident of a ground floor apartment woke up and called the police, the newspapers said.

"This is a building

with thin walls," one of the tenants told Haaretz. "They should have worked more professionally."

Two policemen arrived from a police station about half a kilometre away and detained the five who made no effort to escape and kept their composure, tenants told Yediot and Maariv. They spoke to each other in English and

another language the witnesses did not understand.

One resident described the five as good-looking people in their 20s, dressed like university students. One had tools and a suitcase which police were unable to open, the resident, a woman in her 30s, told Yediot. Suddenly, one of the young men collapsed and complained about

having suffered a heart attack. The witness said it was obvious he was faking, but that police called an ambulance.

Another resident of the apartment block told the Associated Press that she saw a young man lying on the sidewalk outside the building at about 2:30 a.m. on Feb. 19.

at auction in Baghdad. The U.S. proposed resolution warning Iraq of consequences (AFP photo)

Greek premier

Ankara's current stance... the reason why Greece... continues to block Europe... funds earmarked for... under a customs... agreement.

regular dialogue

If such a structure... it could help... to foster a settlement... Middle East conflict... Mr. Talbi who last... was awarded the... Foundation Prize for... commitment to religio... freedom and human rig... He said Muslims, Ch... tians and Jews need... pray together at the... of the Patriarch... encourage peace... counter "the genoc... exclusion and hate... which all religions... tained and which paves... to genocide.

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flight	Other Flights
05:00 ... Amman	07:00 ... Rome
06:30 ... Beirut	14:15 Abu Dhabi, Bahrain
12:00 ... Frankfurt	14:45 ... Vienna
12:00 ... Amsterdam, New York	15:50 ... Dubai
12:00 ... Milan, Madrid	19:00 ... Cairo
12:00 ... Geneva, Rome	23:35 ... Damascus, Paris
12:10 ... London	23:55 ... Amsterdam
12:15 ... Cairo	00:35 ... Athens
12:30 ... Riyadh, Dhahran	03:00 ... Rome
20:05 ... Beirut	
20:15 ... Jeddah	
20:30 ... Abu Dhabi, Dubai	
21:00 ... London	
23:50 ... Amman	
01:30 ... Amman	

S. Korea parliament to vote on premier appointment

SEOUL (R) — South Korea's majority opposition party Friday agreed to end its boycott of parliament and allow a vote on the nominee for premier but said it still opposed President Kim Dae-Jung's choice.

"We haven't solidified a date for the vote, but it's likely to be Monday," Maeng Hyung-Kyu, the majority Grand National Party spokesman told Reuters. "We are feeling pressure from the public so we would like to vote as soon as possible, but tomorrow would be difficult."

"We haven't decided on whether we will submit blank abstention ballots or let the members vote, but our party position has not changed and we still oppose the appointment of Kim Jong-Pil."

President Kim, who took office Wednesday, nominated his coalition partner Kim Jong-Pil to head the cabinet, but the grand

national opposes the nominee because of his past involvement with military dictatorships.

Kim Jong-Pil, one of the masterminds of the 1961 coup which installed Park Chung-Hee as president, was promised the premiership in return for foregoing his own bid for president.

President Kim Dae-Jung Friday met heads of the opposition party to explain the difficulties the government faced and to ask for their cooperation, a presidential spokeswoman Park Sun-Suck said.

Asked about what steps the president would take if his nomination was voted down in parliament, Mr. Park said: "We hope such an event will not occur, but if it does, the president has the right to make another nomination."

Political analysts said the stalemate posed a challenge for the grand national. If parliament confirmed the nomination, the party would see a shake up of its

leadership, they said.

"This is like two guys on motorcycles going full speed and about to collide. The objective is to make the other one chicken out," said Kim Byung-Kook, political science professor at Korea University.

"The outcome in parliament will depend on the way the vote is conducted. A secret ballot could help Kim Jong-Pil, but could bring down (grand national leader) Cho Soon," said Kim Byung-Kook.

Another political science professor at Yonsei University, Lee Ki-Tak, said a confirmation in parliament could even lead to the break up of the majority party.

The parliamentary deadlock left the new president with his predecessor's cabinet for the third day.

All the ministers, including the current prime minister, have resigned but none of the resignations has yet been accepted.

Some new ministry

plaques have been put in place but covered with paper awaiting an outcome to the political stalemate.

"I just hope some decision is made fast. We can't do any work," said an official at the soon-to-be-defunct ministry of information whose head has stopped coming to work.

He said ministry workers had already stuffed large bags with files and were emptying out their desks.

At least half the national assembly's 294 current members would need to attend the vote to constitute a quorum. More than half the lawmakers who attended the vote would need to vote in favour of Kim Jong-Pil to ratify his nomination.

The Grand National has 161 seats while the president's party has 78 seats. The president's coalition partner has 43 seats, another minor opposition party has eight seats, four seats have no party affiliation and five are vacant.



A woman passes two election posters showing Lower Saxony's state Prime minister Gerhard Schröder of the Social Democratic Party and his challenger Christian Wulff (left) of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) in Hanover Feb. 27. Germany's Social Democratic Party (SPD) announced it will decide one day after Lower Saxony's state election on March 1 whether Mr. Schröder or SPD leader Oskar Lafontaine will challenge German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in this year's general elections (Reuters photo)

Kohl tells German voters to forget gloomy polls

OSNABRUECK, Germany (R) — German Chancellor Helmut Kohl urged voters Thursday to ignore opinion polls showing his Christian Democrats (CDU) trailing the Social Democrats (SPD) in lower Saxony ahead of Sunday's state election.

Addressing more than 3,000 people at a final campaign rally, Mr. Kohl accused SPD Premier Gerhard Schröder of mismanaging lower Saxony over the last eight years and blamed the SPD for Germany's woes.

He was ending an unprecedented 11-stop campaign swing through the state designed in part to weaken Mr. Schröder, a dangerous rival to his own prospects for reelection as chancellor in September.

He said Mr. Schröder had failed to tackle crime and had run away from major issues.

"Journalists and pollsters are doubting we can win the election. Push all that nonsense aside," Mr. Kohl told the rally.

"I urge you to go out and tell your friends and colleagues what this election is all about. This is for a government that looks to the future. Don't let yourselves be fooled by snappy public relations. Anyone can buy good PR. But what you can't buy is character."

Mr. Kohl hopes the CDU can win enough votes in Germany's third largest state to harm Mr. Schröder. At the same time, an especially weak showing for the CDU in lower Saxony could also stir inner-party rumblings about Mr. Kohl's leadership.

A strong performance for Mr. Schröder could propel him into the federal race against Mr. Kohl, an challenge he is hoping to nip in the bud. Opinion polls say Mr. Schröder could easily defeat Mr. Kohl.

"We would be a lot further in our reform efforts if it weren't for the unholy blockade tactics in the Upper House of Parliament by Mr. Schröder and the SPD," Mr. Kohl said, referring to the SPD-controlled Bundestag in Bonn made up of state leaders.

Mr. Kohl, 67, who has won four consecutive elections against SPD candidates, has never previously campaigned as extensively in a state election and was caustic about Mr. Schröder.

"I find it incredible that Schröder has discovered the issue of law and order," he said, referring to a short-lived attempt by the SPD last year to muscle in on the subject long dominated by the CDU.

He recalled a rally of left-wing radicals called the

"Chaos Days" in the lower Saxony capital of Hanover three years ago. Police were slow to break up the event and the extremists caused considerable damage for two days.

"Herr Schröder's name will be forever tied to the chaos days. What kind of man lets chaos reign in the middle of his state for several days?" he said.

"He should be ashamed of that. We want a state based on the rule of law. Mr. Schröder has completely failed. It is sickening to think that he wants to try out his experiments elsewhere."

Mr. Kohl warmly praised Christian Wulff, 38, the CDU's candidate, and mentioned his name more than a dozen times in his 85-minute speech.

Mr. Kohl, hailed as a hero as he entered the packed auditorium, began with his standard applause-winning recapitulation of post-war German history and hit a peak early by recalling the 1990 unification.

But he appeared to tire towards the end of his address as he skated over such issues as unemployment and Europe's proposed single currency. He only mentioned the word "euro" once and the audience remained silent. His speech ended shortly thereafter to polite applause.

German soldiers not to be charged for shock video

SCHWEINFURT, Germany (R) — Prosecutors said Friday they had dropped an investigation into a video of mock executions and rapes made by German soldiers.

The video, shot in 1996 at the Hammelburg training ground in southern Germany, showed "macabre scenes of violence" but did not illegally glorify or trivialise violence, the prosecutors said.

The video was made during breaks in training for peacekeeping duties in the former Yugoslavia.

The defence ministry last year filed charges against the seven soldiers who made the video, which provoked widespread shock and stirred memories of Nazi atrocities when extracts were broadcast by a private television station.

Scenes from the film show a young recruit to a German army uniform holding a pistol to the mouth of another recruit. Another shows a soldier in battle fatigues pretending to tape a recruit acting as a woman civilian.

Six of the seven soldiers who made the video left the army by the time it surfaced. The seventh was sacked soon after.

Prosecutors in the southern town of Schweinfurt said the video contained no extreme-right content — such as use of banned Nazi slogans or salutes — nor caused insult to the German army or state.

One of the soldiers involved in the video has said that it was intended only as "satire" and said worse violence appeared on German television most evenings.

The German parliament is currently holding an investigation into incidents linking soldiers to right-wing extremist activity.

30,000 watch hand amputations, lashing in Kabul stadium

KABUL (AFP) — At least 30,000 people packed out the Afghan capital's Olympic stadium Friday to watch the Taliban militia amputate two men's hands and lash a woman accused of adultery, reporters witnessed.

Two alleged thieves were brought into the war-shattered stadium to have their right hands surgically removed, under anaesthetic, by ministry of public health surgeons ordered to perform the punishment.

A woman accused of two counts of adultery was forced to kneel in the centre of the football pitch, clad in her all-covering burqa, to receive 100 symbolic and light lashes with a leather strap.

"This is the punishment they get under Shariah" or Islamic law, explained the Taliban's governor of Kabul, Mullah Manan Niazi, who closely watched the afternoon's proceedings.

He said the spectacle was to become a regular fixture for the stadium and for the entertainment-starved capital where under the hardline militia residents are denied music, cinema and television.

"We have lots of unpunished cases but they have not been cleared because the previous civil servants didn't have the courage, but now these people have been

replaced and this will continue," Ms. Niazi said. First in the centre of the pitch was Suhaila, a woman from southern Kabul accused of committing adultery. She received 100 light lashes which Ms. Niazi said was to humiliate her and not to harm her.

The woman was then driven out of the stadium in a saloon car while a religious scholar recited a sermon of praise to the Taliban scribbled on the back of a cigarette carton, with the spectators responding with religious chants.

Second came Hamidullah and Habibullah, two alleged thieves accused of stealing goods valued at 19,289,000 Afghanis (around \$600) from a shop in Kabul.

The two were sped into the stadium in a Japanese four wheel drive pick up, and to the accompanying tones of a religious sermon, marched to the centre of the pitch with their hands bound.

Closely behind were four surgeons employed by the ministry of public health, who emerged from a vehicle clutching leather doctors bags and heavily disguised in blankets and sky-blue surgical masks.

"They have been told to do this of course, but we do have some other Taliban doctors who have no problem doing it," Mr.

Niazi told AFP.

Surrounded by curious but high spirited Taliban onlookers, the surgeons first administered an anaesthetic, and then proceeded to cut through the thieves' limp right hands with surgical scalpels.

The neatly severed hands were then taken by the index fingers and held aloft by a grinning Taliban fighter, who issued a stern warning to the huge crowd.

"Look. This is a cut hand of a thief, the Shariah punishment for any of you caught for stealing," he exclaimed.

The slumbering bodies of the two thieves — still under anaesthetic — were then driven one lap around the dusty stadium's running track bringing the audience to their feet to peer into the pick up.

At the end of the spectacle, the huge crowd poured out of the stadium to be met by a mass of street hawkers selling nuts, raisins, biscuits and tea, who succeeded in drumming up good trade in the afternoon sunshine.

"This is terrible to watch, but there isn't anything else to do on a Friday," explained Mohammad Agha, a resident who braved the seething crowds to attend the event.

"But don't worry about your bag, there won't be any pickpockets."

17 top Chinese dissidents petition government

BEIJING (AFP) — Seventeen of the most outspoken dissidents still at large in China have sent an open letter to the government demanding human rights improvements and the exoneration of former Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang.

In the letter, a copy of which was seen here Friday, the 17 signees also called for a revision of China's constitution to add guarantees of equality, division of power, press freedoms and minority rights.

"If we do not first revise the constitution, all other laws are meaningless... the people need a path to follow," Hangzhou-based dissident Wang Youcai who signed the letter, told AFP in a telephone interview.

Other signees included activists Shen Liangqing, Xu Shuiliang, Yang Qingheng, Mao Guoliang and Wang Donghai — all of whom have been active in the run-up to the annual meeting of the National People's Congress (NPC), or parliament, which opens next Thursday.

Their letter is evidence of strong organisational links between members of China's tiny dissident movement, which has been decimated in recent years by imprisonment and exile of its most famous members.

It was circulated only among dissidents who had already been convicted and imprisoned for political crimes so as not to endanger anyone with a "clean" record, Mr. Wang said.

More would have participated, but it was decided that the petition would involve only dissidents from Shanghai and surrounding provinces in eastern China, he added.

The open letter, addressed to the NPC, called for the restoration of Mr. Zhao's "fundamental freedoms."

The former general secretary of the Communist Party was ousted immediately after the June 4, 1989, crackdown that ended demonstrations in Beijing's Tiananmen Square because he had sympathised with student protesters.

Held under virtual house arrest in Beijing ever since, he has become a powerful symbol of the crushed democracy movement.

The letter also demanded that China unconditionally release all of its political prisoners, ratify the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and sign its sister treaty, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Thousands of Asian students abandon studies in Australia

SYDNEY (AFP) — Thousands of Asian students have abandoned their studies in Australia and gone home, impacting heavily on the education industry which has sacked teachers, officials said Friday.

"We are the victims of Asia's economic malaise and it is a serious problem," the coordinator of one of the country's leading language institutes told AFP.

Michael Fay, from Sydney's Institute of Languages, said unless there is social and economic stability in the region "the knock-on effects will be even more dramatic."

The Korean Overseas Student Centre has reported that since mid-December half of Sydney's 10,000 South Korean students, most in English language courses, have left because they can no longer afford the fees.

The devaluation of many Asian currencies has seen student incomes slump while fees and living costs have more than doubled.

A typical 16-week English language course, including living expenses, costs each student as much as 10,000 Australian dollars (\$6,700 U.S.).

Mr. Fay said there had been a 40 per cent drop in student numbers at the Institute of Languages, mostly from South Korea, Indonesia and Thailand, from 400 to 250. Teacher redundancies were "inevitable."

"The English language sector is facing its most difficult challenge of the decade, but sadly the government doesn't seem to want to acknowledge that Australia is feeling the impact."

Professor Chris Fell, vice-chancellor of the Insearch Language Centre, said there had been a 30

per cent downturn in student admissions, resulting in 37 of the 140 teaching staff being made redundant.

"This is typically happening all over Australia," he said. "It's a volatile business. Ordinarily we would have signed all the staff up on new contracts."

The regions meltdown has also hit the number of Asian tourists coming to Australia.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data showed Friday arrivals from South Korea plunged 80 per cent in January this year to 6,500, compared with 30,800 in January 1997.

Tourist numbers from Thailand also showed a dramatic drop — down 30 per cent to 3,300, compared with 4,700 in the same month last year.

Indonesian arrivals fell marginally to 10,100, or one per cent.

Police probe plot to kill Mandela at his inauguration

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South African police are investigating an alleged plot by serving police officers to assassinate President Nelson Mandela at his inauguration in May 1994, a newspaper report said here Friday.

The plans are alleged to have crumbled when the hired assassin, a police informer, was tipped off that the conspirators wanted to have him shot later to cover their tracks, the Weekly Mail and Guardian reported.

A spokesman for Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi told AFP he would consider issuing a statement on the matter later in the day.

A special unit set up to uncover police corruption is investigating the alleged assassination attempt.

Mr. Mufamadi's spokesman said the task team was a "covert unit," adding that the "cases are of a sensitive nature and we do not discuss them."

The newspaper said that Willem Frederick Elze claimed in a statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the body investigating human rights abuses in the apartheid era, that he was the hired assassin in the alleged plot.

Mr. Elze, a member of the militant right-wing Afrikaner

Weerstandsbeweging, was to have been paid 250,000 rand (\$51,000) to shoot Mr. Mandela, the newspaper claimed.

He was allegedly given a rifle — with telescopic sight and silencer — to practise in the months leading up to the inauguration.

Investigators later discovered the rifle in the office of a senior superintendent in the police's organised crime intelligence unit, Johan Snyman, the paper said.

Mr. Elze is currently serving a three-year sentence for theft in a Johannesburg prison.

An informed source in the TRC indicated to AFP Friday that Mr. Elze's story had been received with scepticism by the truth body.

The TRC confirmed it had received an amnesty demand from Mr. Elze, in which he included a statement on the plot, but that the demand itself concerned the theft offence for which he was imprisoned.

His demand was rejected because he could not prove a political motive for the theft.

Millions of viewers across the globe watched Mr. Mandela's inauguration on May 10, 1994, after his African National Congress swept to victory in South Africa's first all-race elections.

Cholera, malaria deaths rise to 143 in southern Philippine islands

COTABATO, Philippines (AFP) — The death toll from twin outbreaks of cholera and malaria in a group of remote southern Philippine islands has risen sharply to 144, the regional health officer said here Friday.

Medical teams were airlifted to Siasi and outlying islands earlier Friday but the operation was momentarily disrupted by warning shots fired by Muslim gunmen, regional health officer Mustafa Hiron said, adding no casualties were reported.

The islands, in the Sulu group about 1,000 kilometres south of Manila, are home to the Islamic Samal tribe, which are among the poorest in the Philippines.

The doctor Hiron said many of the dead were heads of families who were mostly engaged in fishing and seaweed farming.

President Fidel Ramos confirmed the outbreak and 88 deaths Wednesday and sent emergency relief aid to the province.

Dr. Hiron said 143 people have died since Feb. 1, including seven Friday. He gave no separate breakdown for cholera and malaria cases.

The area remains a stronghold of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), a Muslim separatist group which signed a peace treaty with the government in 1986 but some of whose forces have yet to disarm.

MNLF men based on nearby

small islands were alarmed by the military helicopters over Siasi and fired warning shots, Dr. Hiron said.

The doctor said the twin outbreak was only discovered on Feb. 19 when three Marines deployed in the small island of Laminusa, home to 20,000 Samals, fell ill. The soldiers had to be airlifted to Zamboanga city for treatment.

Armed forces medical teams sent to check on the rest of the marine unit were met by residents complaining of similar symptoms.

The island has no electricity, no tap water, no health clinics and "most of the people there have not seen a doctor or a medical worker since birth," said Bishop Angelito Lampon of the Roman Catholic vicariate of Jolo Island near Siasi.

"It's painful and excruciating to see the victims crying for help," said the bishop in an interview over Catholic radio station DXMS here. He said he is supervising a church-led relief effort in the Siasi group.

"Health and medical workers saw for themselves that there are more problems to attend to than addressing the cholera and malaria epidemic."

Most of the municipality's children are malnourished and the area has generally poor sanitation and personal hygiene standards, the bishop said.

He urged the government to "let Samals feel the government really cares."



German soldiers not to be charged for shock video

SCHWEINFURT, Germany (AP) — Prosecutors said they had dropped charges of mock executions and rapes made by German soldiers.

The video, shot at the Hammelburg training ground in Germany, "macabre scenes of violence" but did not show any acts of violence, the prosecutors said.

The video was during a break in the peacekeeping duties of the former Yugoslav army.

The defense in last year filed against the seven who made the video, which provoked spread shock and memories of Nazi atrocities when broadcast by a television station.

Scenes from the show, a young German army soldier holding a pistol to the mouth of another soldier, another shows a soldier in a white uniform, a woman in a white uniform.

Six of the seven who made the video, the army by the military court, the seventh was sacked soon after.

Prosecutors in the western town of Schweinfurt said the video was not extreme-right, as such as use of Nazi slogans or symbols, nor caused insult to German army or state.

One of the soldiers involved in the video said that it was only as "satire" and worse violence against German television.

The German police is currently holding investigation into the video, linking soldiers right-wing extremist activity.

War crimes investigators search sites in Serb Republic

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Members of the U.N. tribunal investigating war crimes committed during the Bosnian conflict Friday searched official buildings in the Serb-run part of Bosnia for documents, the tribunal announced.

Armed with warrants, the investigators searched several locations in Banja Luka, in the northwest of Bosnia.

(In Banja Luka, the Serb news agency SRNA said the police headquarters and the town hall were searched.)

Investigators were looking for documents relating to on-going investigations and trials of war crimes committed during the 1992-95 Bosnian war, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) said.

The search was conducted in cooperation with Serb Republic authorities, the NATO-led Stabilisation force (SFOR) and the United Nations' International Police Task Force.

A spokesman for the police force, Alun Roberts, said a total of three buildings were searched but did not say which.

A witness told AFP that officers of Serb Republic President Biljana Plavsic, Prime Minister Miroslav Dodik and the Republika Srpska television station were also searched.

The operation is in no way connected with the arrest of an indicted person, the ICTY said in a statement.

The search marks a new stage in relations between the Serb Republic and the ICTY.

Ms. Plavsic, who is based in Banja Luka, and her new prime minister have in recent times demonstrated their willingness to cooperate with western countries and the ICTY and their desire to implement the 1995 Dayton Peace accords, which ended the war.

Mr. Dodik announced last week that his government would allow the ICTY to set up an office on its territory.



Bosnia's ambassador to the United Nations Muhamed Sacirbey told reporters during a news conference at U.N. headquarters in New York that 40 to 50 survivors of Srebrenica, the Bosnian enclave overrun by the Serbs in mid-1995, may be alive and in prison in Yugoslavia (Reuters photo)

Belgrade denies detaining Srebrenica massacre survivors

BELGRADE (AFP) — Serbian officials Friday denied allegations that they were detaining 40 to 50 survivors of the 1995 massacre in the Bosnian village of Srebrenica.

"This is absolutely not true," Zoran Stevanovic, Serbia's deputy justice minister, told AFP.

Bosnia-Herzegovina's ambassador to the United Nations, Muhamed Sacirbey, claimed Thursday that up to 50 survivors of the massacre in the overwhelmingly Muslim village may be secretly detained in a Serbian prison located in the eastern town of Srebrenica.

"We were surprised (by Sacirbey's remarks) since we have opened all our prisons" for the officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Stevanovic added.

There were "several Muslims held in the prison, but they were citizens of Yugoslavia (FRY, Serbia and Montenegro), and were detained for the crimes they had committed," Mr. Stevanovic said.

The prison in Srebrenica, Mitrovica "hosts also foreign prisoners, among them several Croats, but all of them have been sentenced in Serbia for the crimes they had committed," Mr. Stevanovic said.

In a letter to the president of the U.N. Security Council, Mr. Sacirbey called on the United Nations to launch an investigation into the matter.

Mr. Sacirbey said that Bosnian officials learned about the prisoners from "two completely independent and separate" eyewitnesses — a Croat and a Bosnian who were held separately from Srebrenica survivors.

"The witnesses also mention an American and (a) Pakistani citizen held at the same prison," Mr. Sacirbey said.

In July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces captured the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica, at the time designated by the United Nations as a so-called "safe area."

In some of the worst ethnic cleansing of the civil war, Bosnian Serbs forced some 40,000 Muslims from their homes in Srebrenica, many of whom remain unaccounted for.

According to the ICRC, more than 7,000 people are still listed as missing.

Warring Cambodian factions order ceasefire

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodia's warring factions Friday agreed to a ceasefire ending months of fighting between Phnom Penh's troops and the resistance army of deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

The ceasefire agreement completes the first of four steps in a Japanese peace plan aimed at enabling the exiled prince to return to Cambodia and participate in July's scheduled elections.

However, while diplomats and analysts hailed the ceasefire as a good first step, they cautioned the other three points of the plan had yet to be fulfilled and said it was not clear if the agreement would hold.

"It's an important first step," said a senior Western diplomat. "It's what everyone's been working for. There are a lot of other steps to go, but this is a good beginning."

Chief government spokesman Khieu Kanharith announced Phnom Penh had ordered an end to hostilities just hours after Prince Ranariddh issued his ceasefire declaration in Bangkok.

"To end the suffering of the Cambodian people and to prepare for the upcoming general election in July... I call on the (troops) loyal to me to declare a unilateral ceasefire over Cambodia," the prince said, reserving the right of his troops to self-defence however.

Phnom Penh's ceasefire order, signed by Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Keo Kim Yan, mandated that Prince Ranariddh's men report their positions, numbers and material to government commanders who will ensure their safety and supply them with food as long as they make no move to advance.

It further calls for working groups of government and resistance commanders to reintegrate the prince's soldiers into the army with full back pay and restoration of their rank and position.

The two sides have been battling since last July when strongman Hun Sen effectively ousted Prince Ranariddh in a weekend of fierce fighting in the capital.

Through the agreement completes the first condition of the Japanese plan, analysts said it may be difficult for the resistance to meet one of the main government conditions of the ceasefire — severing links with the outlawed Khmer Rouge guerrilla faction.

Since July, the Khmer Rouge have been allied with the prince and have sent soldiers from their remote jungle bases to help fight Hun Sen's army.

Prince Ranariddh has flipped-flopped on the matter of ties with the Khmer Rouge, at first boasting of them and most recently denying any links.

However, for the government's ceasefire conditions to be met, all Khmer Rouge soldiers must be expelled from the resistance army.

"This is going to be difficult for Ranariddh to prove satisfactorily to Hun Sen who is deeply suspicious already," said one analyst noting that next month the prince is to be tried in absentia for colluding with the guerrilla faction.

"And even if Ranariddh fully complies, Hun Sen can still claim he hasn't and scuttle the plan."

The Khmer Rouge presence in the resistance may prove even more difficult as they are most likely to reject the prince's ceasefire plan and continue fighting either still under his name or on their own, another analyst said.

"The Khmer Rouge hate Hun Sen, he is the embodiment of evil to them," he said. "I can't imagine they'll adhere to the ceasefire and if they don't, all Hun Sen needs to do is to say the resistance is still fighting."

Underlining this point were Hun Sen's comments before the government announced its half of the ceasefire.

Speaking at the inauguration of a new French-funded train repair centre earlier Friday, Hun Sen said he welcomed the prince's initiative but stressed there were other conditions for his return and participation in the polls.

He reiterated the prince must stand trial for allegedly illegally importing weapons and colluding with the Khmer Rouge and then receive a royal pardon if convicted should he wish to stand in the election.

The Phnom Penh military court has set dates of March 4 and 17 for the trials on the two charges, vehemently denied by the prince.

But Hun Sen specifically elaborated on the Khmer Rouge issue quoting the prince as telling Japanese diplomats he would only cut his Khmer Rouge links if Hun Sen did likewise.

"Ranariddh told the Japanese that he is prepared to cut relations with Anlong Veng based on Hun Sen cutting relations with Malai and Pailin," Hun Sen said referring to three Khmer Rouge bases — the latter two of which defected to the government in 1996 before the prince was ousted.

"I don't understand this person, he and I signed together (to bring Malai and Pailin back to the government fold)."

"But today that person demands that we cut relations with Pailin and the other renegade Khmer Rouge bases that he himself accepted (when he was in power). I don't understand. This person, he could be called 'immature'."

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Olympic Park bomb linked to abortion clinic blasts

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Federal investigators have found a metal component linking the bomb that went off at Atlanta's Olympic Park in 1996 to similar blasts at two abortion clinics in Atlanta, Georgia and Birmingham, Alabama.

Investigators said small steel plates recovered after the Olympic blast matched plates found in bomb attacks at abortion clinics in Atlanta, Georgia and Birmingham, Alabama.

The Alabama attack on Jan. 29 killed an off-duty police officer.

Investigators have suspected for some time that the bombings were perpetrated by the same group or individual. So far, no suspect in any of the bombings has been arrested.

They said the metal plates were cut from the same batch of metal from a metal works plant in Franklin, North Carolina, that employed a friend of Eric Robert Rudolph, sought in connection with the Birmingham bombing.

The findings have triggered a dispute between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) over who should control the investigation. So far, both agencies have been jointly working on the investigation.

The animosity has been so intense that Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder Thursday convened a meeting between senior officials from both agencies "just to get them to cool off," one official said.

The FBI apparently wants to assign more agents to the probe and reorganise the case into a large scale serial bombing inquiry, to be headed by the agent who led the agency's Unabomber investigation.

by Vietnamese traffickers, not only to Europe, but also to China, Cambodia and Macau, both for prostitution and for arranged marriages.

Both drugs trafficking and the trade in people were difficult to monitor as "now international crime is well organised... before it used to be regional organisations," Ms. Gradin said.

To fight the trade it was necessary to move away from just national enforcement.

"We need to have more intelligence exchanges to catch these criminals, to find ways of extraditing these people, an openness of intelligence services," she said.

But asked if Vietnam's intelligence service was opening up, she said "no comment," but added: "I expect them to be open and do their work. Sometimes there are difficulties, national police are sceptical of other police organisations, this is a problem that you have in Interpol."

VACANCIES AVAILABLE

An exciting four-year international project headquartered in Amman is seeking applicants for the following positions. Each of the project's three components—microfinance, improved policy implementation and business association support—is expected to make an important contribution to accelerated private sector growth in the Jordanian economy.

Accountant. The accountant will be responsible for managing all activities related to the project's accounts and banking transactions. In addition, he/she will be responsible for management of electronic and other data related to the project's grant management programs. The successful applicant will hold a university degree in accounting, have a minimum of 5 years experience as an accountant, preferably in the private sector, and have solid experience with one or more accounting software packages. Experience with the Solomon accounting software package is preferred.

Executive Secretaries / Secretaries. The executive secretaries will support the project director and each of the component leaders. The successful applicants will possess the following minimum qualifications: a university degree, at least five years experience as a secretary in a similar position in the private sector, and the following additional skills and experience:

- A high degree of proficiency in written, spoken and typing English & Arabic;
- A high degree of proficiency in MS Word (Arabic version) word processing software. Proficiency in MS Excel and MS Office, particularly in a network environment is preferred;
- Self-motivation, diligence and ability to work under pressure as a team member;
- Excellent planning and communication skills.

Driver. The successful applicants will possess the following:

- Five years experience as a driver in a similar situation;
- A valid Jordanian private driver's license;
- The ability to service and maintain automobiles;
- A willingness to work after working hours;
- The ability to speak and read English is an advantage;
- Official certificate of good conduct and proof of a clean driving record.

The project work days will be Sunday through Thursday, and the daily office hours will be 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., except for the drivers who must also be willing to work after hours from time to time.

Applicants for all positions must submit their CV for the attention of Suite 306 at fax #551-2305. The deadline for receiving CV's is 5:00 p.m., Friday March 6th, 1998. Thank you.

Rwandan mechanic jailed for genocide

KIGALI (R) — A Rwandan court has sentenced a mechanic found guilty of genocide crimes in 1994 to life imprisonment, the Rwanda news agency reported.

The privately-owned agency said Tharcisse Karuranga was found guilty of "category two" genocide crimes by a court in Butare, Rwanda's second largest city, and sentenced Thursday.

Under Rwandan law "category one" crimes carry the death penalty while second tier offences are punishable by a maximum life imprisonment.

About 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates were killed by Hutu extremists in 1994 in a three-month genocide.

The court said that during the massacres Mr. Karuranga killed Tutsis who sought refuge at his home and herded others into a stadium in Butare where they were slaughtered.

The London-based African rights group says between 5,000 and 7,000 people were killed at Mutunda stadium during the genocide.

Mr. Karuranga, who was defended by a lawyer from the international agency Advocates Sans Frontières (lawyers without borders), had pleaded not guilty.

Rwandan jails currently hold more than 150,000 people, almost all from the Hutu majority, suspected of involvement in the slaughter. Many have already spent three years in harsh conditions and at the present pace of prosecution most will die of old age before their cases are heard.

According to Rwanda's ministry of justice, by December last year, 12 months after trials began, 304 people had been tried for genocide-related crimes, of whom 108 had been sentenced to death and 103 jailed for life.

Seventy-six suspects have been sentenced to jail terms ranging from six to 12 years while 17 have been acquitted.

In contrast, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), which is holding 22 genocide suspects at its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania, has yet to complete its first trial, 40 months after it was created.

The ICTR, established by the United Nations to try mainly high-profile suspects who managed to flee Rwanda after the genocide and go into exile, has indicted 57 people on genocide charges.

The maximum penalty the ICTR can impose is life imprisonment served in humane conditions.

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Malaria deaths in southern islands

small islands were almost completely free of malaria, the military helicopter Sias and fired warning shots.

Dr. Hiron said. The doctor said the outbreak was only the latest in a series of outbreaks in the small islands.

Laminus, home to the Samals, fell ill. The soldiers to be admitted to Zambesi for treatment.

Armed forces medical sent to check on the island. Marine unit were met by demands complaining of symptoms.

The island has no electricity, no tap water, no health and "most of the people have not seen a doctor since medical worker since the said Bishop Angelo."

of Jolo Island near Sulu. "It's painful and extensive to see the victims crying for help," said the helicopter interview over Catholic station DXMS here. He said station DXMS here. He said station DXMS here.

Health and medical relief effort in the Sulu group is supervising a clinic to see for themselves that more problems to solve are more problems to solve than addressing the malaria epidemic.

Most of the children are malnourished, the area has generally poor sanitation and personal hygiene standards, the bishop said. He urged the government "let Samals feel the government really cares."

15 die in Kashmir avalanche

JAMMU, India (AFP) — At least 15 people were killed when an avalanche destroyed a village in the Himalayan state of Kashmir, authorities said Friday.

The small village of Mangat, about 200 kilometers north of Jammu in the south of the state, was hit by the avalanche late Thursday, officials said. The dead included six women and five children.

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Search for real progress

AS THE international community in general and the U.N. Security Council members in particular continue to take stock of the "agreement" reached between Secretary General Kofi Annan and the Iraqi government last week, it may well be the right moment to deal with the fundamentals of the Iraq crisis rather than strive to attain limited goals. Both Washington and London are working feverishly to convince the other members of the council to accept language in a resolution that purports to threaten Iraq with "serious consequences" should it not keep its side of the bargain in the Baghdad accord. But the international community should go beyond immediate objectives and aim for a grand policy that can bring the entire Iraqi conflict to a peaceful resolution. His Majesty King Hussein has in fact called for such a visionary policy when he said, during a recent television interview, that there should be a direct dialogue between Baghdad and Washington as the most sensible and effective way yet to resolve the issue once and for all.

True, on the surface, a meaningful dialogue between Iraq and the U.S. may appear far-fetched. There are no absolute reasons, however, to prevent the initiation of such contacts, as the Clinton administration is making with North Korea and other unfriendly countries. The U.N. chief himself may have laid the groundwork for a resumption of ties between the two countries when he travelled to Baghdad in search of a way to defuse the crisis. This in fact could be the context in which His Majesty made his call for a fresh start especially in the knowledge that the Iraqi regime has sought contact and dialogue since 1990. Now in the wake of the successful trip of Annan to Baghdad the doors that former President George Bush closed should be reopened, if only for the sake of regional stability and world peace.

Much preparatory work may have to be done in any event, and the enormity of the task should not deter the two sides from taking initial small steps. If Iraq succeeds in convincing the international community that it seeks to comply in good faith with the spirit and letter of the recent agreement, and as a result, the U.S. takes serious interest in the need to lift the sanctions, there will indeed be progress.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek commended U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan for restoring credibility to the world organisation and stemming U.S. arrogance. Annan went to Iraq carrying the council's approval of his mission and succeeded in persuading Iraq to comply with the U.N. resolutions. Dr. Fanek said. From now on, he said, the U.S. can no longer exert its hegemony on the Security Council, considering it as an organisation working for the U.S. State Department, said the writer. He said Iraq for its part has achieved success in that it prevented the massed U.S. forces from their purpose, wrested the initiative from President Clinton, reaffirmed the world's respect for Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and guaranteed a new procedure by which the U.N. inspectors will report to the Security Council through the secretary general. What is more important, he added, is that the secretary general has promised to raise the question of lifting the sanctions with the Security Council once the inspectors' mission has been completed.

Al Dustour's Suleiman Arar criticised the government for banning peaceful demonstrations expressing solidarity with Iraq in its confrontation with the U.S. saying the 21 political parties had requested demonstration permits, but the prime minister refused saying demonstrations are illegal and will be prevented. There would have been no harm done to the government had it allowed the demonstrators to march in the streets of Amman but the government chose to use tear gas and batons to attack the worshippers once they emerged from the mosque and even before they could start their march peacefully, noted the writer. He said the Jordanian citizens have the right to question the government's actions which are undemocratic and which remind Jordanians of the days of martial law. Demonstrations against the U.S. threats to Iraq were staged in other Arab states including Egypt, but no troops or police forces were deployed to quell these demonstrations, noted the writer. He said, in Ma'an, the police used force against the worshippers as they did with the worshippers in Amman, and violence erupted as a result. The writer said Jordan's image was hurt and the government's credibility was marred because of these actions which, he said, run contrary to and harm the path of democracy.

Jordanian Perspective

Europe gets tough on Mossad

By Dr. Musa Kellani

IT IS not at all surprising to hear that Mossad agents are running loose in Europe violating the laws of host countries, but what is indeed surprising is that some of them have been arrested and the concerned governments are publicly discussing the issue. There have been hundreds of incidents where Mossad agents carried out assassinations and kidnappings as part of what Israel considers its fight against international terrorism and extremism, but in almost all cases the host governments preferred to keep the affair under wraps due to a strong feeling of empathy and identification with a small people surrounded by "Arab predators!!!" The new changes in European public opinion made many decision makers throw out their coloured lenses and see what brutalities — bone-breaking, torture and killing — the Palestinians suffer. That could be the catalyst that made Swiss officials deal with Israel on a bilateral level and at a later stage close the first file of "stolen Jewish gold and Nazi funds" as a prelude to closing the new file. The report that at least one Mossad agent was recently arrested in Switzerland in a bugging operation gone awry is a clear indication that European governments are exasperated with the apparent impunity with which Mossad operates in their territories.

Obviously it also reflects their discontent with the state of affairs on the political scene in the Middle East, with Israel refusing to relent in its hardline position against recognising the legitimate political and territorial rights of the Arabs. We'd like to hope that one of the repercussions

of the ongoing revelations of Mossad operations would be some form of European government action on the political level to force Israel to see what is internationally acceptable in terms of bringing about security and stability in the region so as not to warrant covert "security" operations by agencies like Mossad anywhere in the world.

The revelation that Mossad was active in Switzerland and was violating the country's laws of privacy of telephone conversations may not be of immediate relevance to us in Jordan except the implications that it might have for Jordanian diplomacy in that country. But it has brought up the most unpleasant memory of the botched Mossad attempt to assassinate Khaled Misha'al in Jordanian territory. We are disturbed by the recent ruling of an Israeli court that the Israeli prime minister could authorise covert operations anywhere in the world: it should send a clear message to all countries that internal political considerations would not dissuade the Israeli premier to order the assassination of anyone anywhere.

What is indeed more disturbing is the report that it was the foul-up of the Swiss operation rather than the Misha'al fiasco in Amman that prompted Danny Yatom's resignation as head of Mossad. We were hoping that the resignation was triggered by an Israeli realisation that no Israeli agency should undertake such an operation in Jordan, often described in the international media as the Arab country most close to the Jerusalem. But if indeed

the botched attempt in Switzerland and not Jordan was behind the Yatom resignation, then it gives a totally different light to Jordanian-Israeli relations. It shows how far Israel has gone in underestimating Jordan.

Jordan made peace with Israel as a strategic move stemming from its firm commitment to dialogue and negotiations as the means to resolve problems. Obviously it was not the case with Israel, which found it fit to sign a peace treaty with Jordan because of its desire to make inroads into the Arab World rather than a realisation that good neighbourliness is an essential part of coexistence in the region. That throws into question the entire Jordanian perceptions of the state of peace it has with Israel as well as the economic and political interaction which should be conducive to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace between the Arabs and Israel.

The elements that are slowly emerging into focus in relations between Jordan and Israel should indeed prompt us to rethink our priorities and perhaps reshape our approach to the Netanyahu's policies since they clearly show that our hope is ill-founded that the state of peace between us gives us a privileged position to advance the quest for all-embracing peace in the region. Israel, under its present leadership, cannot be relied upon to draw from the real requirements of peace but can only be trusted to make tactical moves rather than strategic steps aimed at reaching piecemeal solutions to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

For now, diplomacy reigns, and spoilers sulk

By George S. Hishmeh

WASHINGTON — This time around, the victory scored in Baghdad on Feb. 23 bad but one father: while the defeat was not an orphan.

In a master stroke, Kofi Annan, the soft-spoken U.N. secretary general, pulled the rug from under the practitioners of brinkmanship, the United States, Britain and Iraq.

At the conclusion of a long weekend of high-stakes negotiations with the adamant Iraqi leadership, the Ghanaian-born diplomat seemed confident that all 15 Security Council members, including the United States and Britain, would accept the agreement that promises to eliminate the threat of U.S.-British air strikes against Iraq.

"In my view, the terms of this agreement, which has been concluded in writing, are acceptable and will remove a major obstacle to the full implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions," he told a press conference in Baghdad on Feb. 23.

It took President Clinton several nerve-racking hours after Annan signed the agreement with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz to voice his cautious support of the U.N.-brokered deal that will have to be endorsed by the U.N. Security Council this week.

The eloquent Iraqi deputy prime minister credited diplomacy — "wise, balanced United Nations, world diplomacy" — that enabled us to reach this agreement — and not the "saber-rattling," obviously referring to the American-British armada in the Gulf ready to pounce on Iraq at a moment's notice.

But Annan acknowledged that negotiators had succeeded through "diplomacy backed by firmness and force," a view that must have sounded as sweet music

to American policymakers. Clinton, in fact, paid tribute to the "steadfastness" of the American troops in the Gulf region with helping to defuse the situation in Iraq.

The Russians were the first to trumpet their push for a diplomatic solution as the catalyst that helped end the standoff with Iraq over U.N. inspections. The Chinese and French followed suit. Arab public opinion, which opposed a military strike, was credited with helping the successful mission of the U.N. secretary general, and contributing to the "wobbliness" in the American stance.

Although some in Washington and London are eagerly awaiting the "fine print" in the agreement, it is difficult to see how after the ringing endorsement of the accord — and Clinton's belated backing — that they could find any ammunition with which to scuttle the tentative pact.

There was some anxiety here over the weekend in what some observers saw as new and tougher American line in the early reaction to Annan's finest hour.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told a television audience — ABC's "This Week" — that it was premature to talk about what Annan has achieved in Baghdad, and then she added ominously, "It is possible that he will come with something we don't like, in which case we will pursue our national interest."

Very few people here banked on Annan's success, remembering the failure of another U.N. secretary general, Javier Perez de Cuellar, who was unable to avert the 1991 Gulf war while on a similar last-ditch visit to the Iraqi capital.

Throughout the crisis, U.S. officials have repeatedly maintained that the showdown with Baghdad was between the U.N. and Saddam Hussein's Iraq and

never one involving U.S. "national interests," which recognisably abound in the region.

A senior American official, somewhat testily, said, "the test of any diplomatic solution will be actions, not words, and that is a test where there is no immediate answer."

"One way or another we're going to have to topple Saddam Hussein" — U.S. Senator Arlen Specter, a Republican from Pennsylvania

The Clinton administration, having in the first place endorsed the Annan mission, will find it difficult to turn its guns on it at this stage regardless of the fine print. Ironically, however, it may encounter as much trouble in selling the new agreement to the American public as it tried rather unsuccessfully in its advocacy of a preemptive strike against Baghdad.

The difference this time is that the opposition to the U.N. deal with Saddam Hussein is coming from establishment groups. In fact, several former officials and some congressmen are openly advocating the overthrow of the Iraqi regime with increased assistance to the divided Iraqi opposition.

Several former officials who served under Presidents Reagan and Bush have openly suggested that the United States incite a rebellion to overthrow the Iraqi leader. In a letter released to the press,

the group of 38 foreign and security policymakers argued that the policy of "containment" cannot eliminate the risk of Iraq using weapons of mass destruction.

Senator Arlen Specter, a Republican from Pennsylvania, said on television, "One way or another we're going to have to topple Saddam Hussein" to ensure that he does not build weapons of mass destruction.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi described the unexpected turn of events as "dicey and unresolved." He urged the administration to work on a "long-term plan" to deal with the Iraqi question.

A military analyst thought a new Clinton doctrine is emerging whereby the U.S. is advertising its willingness to go it alone should any country wish to raise the specter of weapons of mass destruction. The United States will keep its forces in the Gulf region at the ready. If Iraq cheats again, the president "warned, the United States 'would have the unilateral right to respond at a time, place and manner of our own choosing'."

There is no doubt that Annan's successful efforts have enhanced the position of the United Nations, much to the chagrin of some conservative elements in the United States.

Dr. Clovis Maksoud, a former Arab League representative to the United Nations, described the successful mission of the secretary general as "a significant breakthrough." He thought, "it revitalises the United Nations as a custodian of peace making, it enhanced the position of the secretary general, and isolated the position of the Anglo-Saxons, namely Britain and the United States."

He, however, did not see any immediate or direct effect on the stalled Middle East peace process "because we have to wait for this agreement to anchor."

Outcome of Annan's Baghdad visit should forge greater united Arab efforts, writers agree

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

THE LOCAL dailies tackled the end of the U.N.-Iraq crisis and its repercussions, the Maan incidents and domestic issues.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek said now that the Iraq-U.N. crisis is over it is important to focus on the next step, and the time has come for the Arabs to go on the offensive. It goes without saying that the Iraqis, backed by Arab states and the peace loving nations of the world, have succeeded in thwarting America's bid for war with the result that the U.N.'s mandate has been renewed and reestablished, said the writer. What is needed now, said Dr. Fanek, is for the world community to work towards ending the U.N. sanctions on Iraq which has now proved itself totally committed to respecting and implementing the U.N. resolutions. He said by massing its forces in the Gulf, the U.S. has kept the Arab World in a defensive posture, but the time has come to start the offensive for a permanent peaceful solution to the Iraqi problem starting with the lifting of all sanctions.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Taher Adwan warned that as long as the U.S. forces remain in the Gulf, there is always the

danger of aggression on Iraq. During the crisis the Arab masses staged demonstrations and were deeply concerned over the looming aggression on Iraq simply because such an offensive would be detrimental to the whole Arab region, not only Iraq, Adwan said. He said the Americans had accused Iraq of hiding chemical and biological weapons in Libya and Sudan which means that the U.S. will also direct their aggression on these two countries once Washington is done with Iraq. As it is clear now for the Arabs that they are prone to aggression any time and under any excuse, it must be clear to their leaders that unless they act collectively to protect their national interests they will face disintegration, he said.

The writer said the Arab World must act together first to lift the sanctions on Iraq and then end U.S. hegemony on Arab destiny. Yasser Za'atreh of Al Dustour said that not only Iraq came out the winner in the recent world crisis, but so did the whole world. The U.S. had wanted to consolidate its hold on the world to serve the Zionist movement's causes without any regard to other nations' interests, but its objectives have been stemmed thanks to a united world against it, he said. Through threats against other nations the

U.S. had wanted to blackmail the world and maintain its hegemony, but tyranny and arrogance proved to be a losing game, he added. The writer said the Arab countries have to move swiftly now and benefit from the situation in which the U.S. is finding itself more and more isolated and Israel's actions condemned. The U.S. and Israel had wanted to benefit from the world tension and aggression but the Arabs must direct their attention to benefiting from emergence of a new hope for peace, said the writer.

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never one involving U.S. "national interests," which recognisably abound in the region. A senior American official, somewhat testily, said, "the test of any diplomatic solution will be actions, not words, and that is a test where there is no immediate answer."

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THE WEEK IN PRINT

Saleh Qallab, a writer for Al Arab Al Yawm said there is no doubt that the next battle will be over the lifting of the U.N. sanctions. If the Iraqis want to end their present plight their leadership must act with utmost care and responsibility and back the other Arab and foreign countries' efforts designed to help them end the sanctions for good, the writer said. He cautioned the Iraqi leadership against any violation of the new agreement concluded with the U.N. so as to avoid further complications and fur-

iously not happy about the Iraq-U.N. deal For Israel, the destruction of Iraq and other Arab countries serves its own purpose because it seeks to see the Arabs in total disarray, weak and unable to defend themselves and their interests in the face of its aggression, said the writer. Immediately after the announcement of the U.N.-Iraq deal the Israeli leaders expressed concern that the Iraqis will not abide by the accord, according to the writer. Such statements, Hassan said, further expos-

es the Israeli government's desire to see Iraq devastated so that it can pursue its colonisation of Arab lands. Israel which has not signed the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and has stockpiled all kinds of weapons of mass destruction is urging the U.S. to attack Iraq for suspicion that it still has remnants of chemical weapons, said the writer. He said the Arab Nation should wake up to the Israeli danger and act collectively to ward off continued Israeli aggression on their territories.

Disturbances and violence have erupted in Ma'an four times in the past 10 years but no study of the real problems facing that city and its people have yet been made to prevent repetition of such incidents, according to Sultan Hattab of Al Ra'i. It is not enough for the government to say that an infiltrator has instigated disturbances or incited people to rebel, the time has come for careful study of the social and economic conditions of the local inhabitants to pave the ground for durable solutions, said the writer. Following the previous incidents, wise voices were raised demanding that a dialogue be opened with the government to reach a solution to problems, but nothing was done, he added. The local inhabi-

Jordan, PNA aim to increase trade to JD250m in '98

AMMAN — Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) aim to increase the trade volume between them to JD250 million during 1998, sharply higher than last year's JD22 million.

At a seminar held by the Jordanian Trade Association (JTA) Jordanian and Palestinian officials blamed Israel's strict security measures for impeding the flow of trade between the two sides.

"It is said that four years after the PNA assumed authority, the volume of trade between Jordan and the PNA amounted only to JD22 million," PNA Trade Ministry Secretary

General Sa'eb Bamiah told the seminar.

According to Mr. Bamiah, the trade volume between the PNA and Israel amounted to \$3 billion with Palestinian exports to only \$300 million.

"Therefore we have to join forces and coordinate plans to enhance our trade volume and remove all Israeli obstacles," he said.

Israel has been trying to maintain monopoly over the Palestinian market which absorbs between \$2.7 billion and \$4 billion annually of Israeli-made products, he added. "We have to work

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh
Special to the Jordan Times

towards replacing Israeli goods with Jordanian ones," Mr. Bamiah stressed.

Only five per cent of Palestinian imports come from countries other than Israel due to the Jewish state's restrictions. Palestine is the second largest market for Israeli products after the European Union (EU).

Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Mohammad Halaiah agreed with Mr. Bamiah, saying he hopes to see improved bilateral trade exchanges.

Dr. Halaiah said high customs duties imposed on Jordanian goods that, according to Israel, do not fulfil certain qualifications or standards have impeded a smooth entry of these products to the PNA.

According to JTA Chairman Bassam Saket, "Israel is using the specifications and standards issue as a pretext to hinder Jordanian exports to the Palestinian self rule areas."

"Palestinians should be the ones to set the standards for the goods they import from Jordan and not the Israelis," Dr. Saket emphasised.

Dr. Halaiah said the fragile Palestinian market and the lack of necessary services on the borders are also factors hindering trade.

"The PNA is still in the process of building a legal and institutional framework, which requires a long time," said Dr. Halaiah.

During the seminar, Mr. Bamiah criticised several Jordanian busi-

nessmen who export goods to the PNA through Israeli agents instead of Palestinians.

"This reflects negatively on the Palestinian consumer, as it adds an extra cost on the authority by 45 per cent," he said.

Both sides also stressed the need for a greater Jordanian role in boosting cooperation in the field of trade and border related issues.

At a meeting last week, the Jordanian-Palestinian Joint Ministerial Committee said trade links between both sides will be strengthened after the reconstruction of the King Hussein Bridge on the Jordan River.

The Ministry of Public Works in Amman has already prepared the designs for the new bridge, to be financed by Japan.

Israel still controls the only two bridges connecting Jordan to the Palestinian territories.

Jordan and Palestine signed two accords in December to encourage tourism and to set standards for product specifications.

At a two-day meeting in the West Bank of Ramallah, the ministerial committee agreed to help facilitate import proce-

dures — a headache for Jordanians and Palestinians alike.

Palestinian officials had proposed to eliminate the back-to-back system which they say has been hindering the flow of goods between the two sides.

Jordanian officials had also promised to study a PNA proposal to eliminate the sales taxes imposed on Palestinian products on grounds it was hurting their competitiveness in the Jordanian market.

The PNA also agreed to consider widening the list of products imported from Jordan and to present a new list of goods that could be exported in line with long term plans to attain bilateral free trade.

Despite these agreements, both sides still fear that Israel will continue to hamper trade exchanges with the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Mr. Bamiah concluded that a tripartite meeting grouping Jordan, the PNA and Israel is expected to be held in May to try and reverse the Israeli obstacles to trade between Jordan and the Palestinian self-rule areas.

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Members of the 1st Amman Cub Scout Pack forming an honour guard for the British Ambassador to Jordan Christopher Battiscombe arriving at the International Community School in Amman to open their new Learning Resources Centre

British ambassador opens new Learning Resources Centre at International Community School

WATCHED BY the children and some invited guests, British Ambassador to Jordan Christopher Battiscombe cut the ribbon, then unveiled a plaque commemorating the opening of the new Learning Resources Centre (LRC) at the International Community School (ICS) in Amman. He followed this with an address recalling recent changes in the school, commenting on the energy and commitment from all parties involved in its development. The LRC provides accommodation for the library, an audiovisual room and new computer work stations; it will soon have an Internet connection to the world. The library has over 5,000 fiction books and more than 4,000 fact and reference books that, together with various computer programmes, CD ROMs, posters and videos support curriculum activities across the school. The next major development proposal is for a purpose-built sports complex, the ICS continues to look to the future.

After having a chance to look around the LRC, Mr. Battiscombe took the opportunity to visit the classes and chat informally with some of the one hundred and twenty five children who attend the school, an experience all involved enjoyed.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Disorder
- Kong
- Cut corners
- Depict distinctly
- Square measure
- Palmer of golf
- Ephron or Lofts
- "Hud" co-star
- Sports
- Intractions
- Long-running TV quiz show
- Yawmed
- Tennis unit
- Double bend
- Sternward
- Health resorts
- Spanish river
- Two squared
- Letters on gravestones
- Places for gatherings
- 1981 Bond film
- Robs
- Also not
- Flanist's reach
- Constantine's birthplace
- Light powder
- Simpson judge
- Luis Chospo
- By way of
- Loathed
- Morse radio series
- See 57D
- Cat or mat
- lead-in
- All even
- Susan of "All My Children"
- Pronounce
- indistinctly
- "You" (song)
- Lucy Ricardo's landlady
- Transmitted
- Look lustily

By Stanley B. Whitten
Northbrook, IL

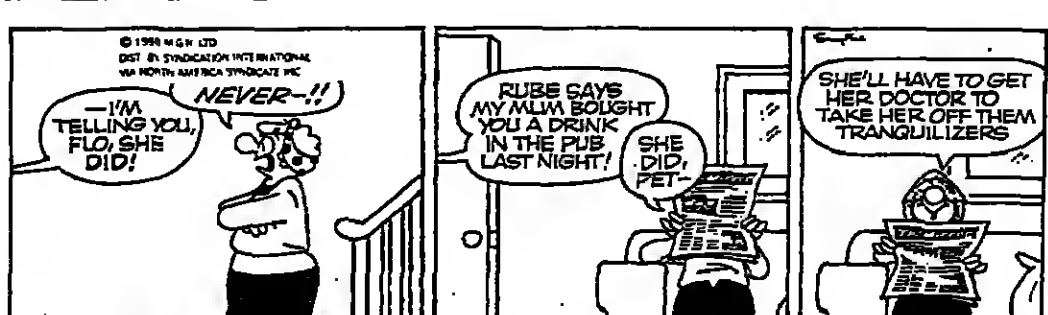
DOWN

- Fellows
- WWII arena
- Sacred text
- Use a razor
- Dangle
- Sandwich cookie
- Fastidious
- Celebratory events
- Two-pointers, in football
- Fast-food magazine Ray
- Accustom
- Trumpeter Davis
- Butinsky
- Ames and Asner
- Waiters and waitresses
- Fishing hooks
- Walking
- Former German kingdom
- Michael Jordan's nickname
- Use credit
- Yoko's family
- Actress Meg
- Impassive
- Make joyful
- Protestant gathering
- Salad dressing ingredient
- "Are There"
- Definite article
- Move sideways
- Alaskan language
- V-shaped cut
- Build up
- With 63A, "Star Wars" robot
- Sotto (in an undertone)
- log
- Daze
- Wrongful act
- Dining area
- Change color

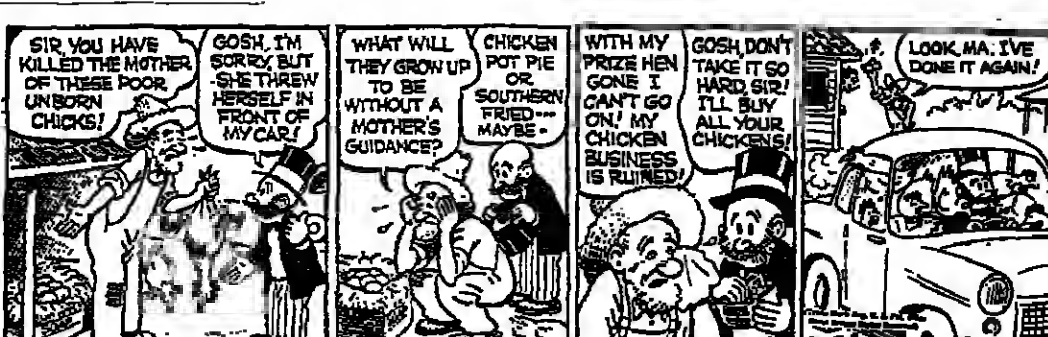
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You have the whole weekend to be uninhibited, energetic and creative. Be careful. When these conditions are in effect, it's easy to hurt someone's feelings. You'd certainly come to the rescue if a friend were the victim. That's better than accidentally finding yourself the aggressor. Just watch what you say and you'll do fine.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You're being pushed to finish things you've said you'd do. There's a big difference between saying you'll do something and actually doing it. It's also a good time to make things grow. Prepare a window box or, if weather permits, start getting your garden ready. Early next week will be a great time for planting.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) This is a great weekend for team sports. There's nothing better for getting exercise. Games are also a good way to learn not to take yourself too seriously. You get a little objectivity, which can help you stay on track in your daily life. So get out and play with your friends, just for the fun of it.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) If someone in your life is always in crisis, that condition will be worse right now. This whole weekend could be about putting out brush fires (hopefully not literally). You might feel inspired to take on a challenging weekend assignment of your own. You couldn't pick a better time for gardening, either indoor or outdoor.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You're still thinking about money, especially how to spend it. You may be particularly interested in sports equipment. Perhaps you could do a little shopping on your way out of town. It looks like you and your sweetheart have got something exciting planned. If you haven't, don't worry about it. You'll think of it as you go along.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is a good day to discuss financial matters. You and your partner need to have a conversation that covers all the bases. First, figure out what you want. Then look at what you need, how much money you have and how much money the other person has. You might find there are more options than you ever dreamed possible.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) It looks like you're interested in learning a new activity. You might feel a little awkward at first, but that's OK. The person who's teaching you doesn't mind at all. In fact, you're cute when you're awkward. You could be making a much better impression than you realise.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) There's more work for you, and possibly more money. If you have something to sell, this is an excellent day to put it on the market. That could be anything from recyclable odds and ends to real estate. It's also a fine weekend for a garage sale. You could make enough money to get that new athletic equipment you've been wanting.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You feel like getting out and trying things you would have passed on just a couple days ago. You're surprised at how much better you feel. It's a magnificent weekend for sporting events, by the way. That's true whether you're a participant or a spectator. Get involved in as many of them as possible.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) This is a good time to take care of things at home. If you don't already have a list, somebody else certainly does. Your energy level is high, and you're very intelligent. So even jobs you don't know how to do are doable. All you need is a little bit of time and a good book on the subject. You've got all weekend. Better get going.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A friend will come up with a marvellous idea first thing this morning and you have the whole weekend to work on the project. The two of you will create the intellectually stimulating environment where anything is possible. You could make something so magnificent, even you will be amazed.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Remember how that song goes: Don't count your money while you're sitting at the table, there's time enough for counting when the dealing's done? Well, the dealing's done. Count your money in a safe place, so you don't have a lot of distractions. And after that's all finished, spend some of it on yourself!

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"My sister's getting remarried. She got a great deal on a previously-owned husband with low mileage."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

AZERC

TOSOP

CROITE

DEKORF

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: **IT IN**

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: **NEWLY ARRAY BUBBLE CHEERY**
Answer: You might call his crying this — **A BEACH BAWL**

OSCOPPE

ATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1998
Tribune Media Services, Inc.

April 19) You have the whole weekend and it's easy to hurt someone's feelings. The rescue if a friend were the victim and you'll do fine.

May 20) You're being pushed to limit do. There's a big difference between actually doing it. It's about giving. Prepare a window box or, if it's a garden ready. Early next week will.

June 21) This is a great weekend for better for getting exercise. Families (not to take yourself too seriously) which can help you stay on track in a play with your friends, just for the fun.

July 21) If someone in your life, addition will be worse right now. It's about putting out brush fires that feel inspired to take on a challenge of your own. You couldn't put a better indoor or outdoor.

August 21) You're still thinking about it. You may be particularly interested in you could do a little shopping. Looks like you and your sweetheart are planned. If you haven't, don't wait as you go along.

September 22) This is a good day to do, and your partner need to have a bases. First, figure out what you need, how much money you have, other person has. You might find it ever dreamed possible.

October 22) It looks like you're OK. The person who's teaching it, you're cute when you're smiling, much better impression than you really.

November 22) There's more to money. If you have something to put it on the market. The odds are good and ends to real estate. Garage sale, you could make some. Little equipment you've been wanting.

December 22) You'd be surprised at how much money you need for sporting events. If you're a participant or a spectator (or both) as possible.

January 20) This is a good day to do, and your partner need to have a bases. First, figure out what you need, how much money you have, other person has. You might find it ever dreamed possible.

February 20) This is a good day to do, and your partner need to have a bases. First, figure out what you need, how much money you have, other person has. You might find it ever dreamed possible.

March 20) Remember how it was, money while you're sitting at the table, waiting when the dealer's done? Put your money in a safe place. And after that, all kinds of things.

January: Amethyst — Opt

ALF By Glasbergen

GLASSBERGEN

WHAT HE DID WHEN HE LOST THE RACE

Now arrange the cards where it form the sentence above. As suggested by the above cartoon

IT IN (HARVEY KARPIS)

LY ARRAY BUBBLE CHERRY

right call has crying this — AGH BAWL

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Jerusalem Insurance Company raises capital to JD3m, reports lower production volume

THE GENERAL assembly of the Jerusalem Insurance Company approved unanimously, during an extraordinary session, to raise the company's capital to JD3 million. The approval authorised giving a share and a half as a free bonus to shareholders for each share they hold.

The fire bonus would come from transferring the insurance premium and part of the voluntary reserve to the paid-up capital. The general assembly authorised the board of directors to deal with about 312,500 shares in a whatever manner it sees fit.

Deputy board chairman Ziyad Masri told the shareholders during an ordinary meeting that preceded the extraordinary session that the Jordanian insurance market during 1997 witnessed a stiff competition that brought "prices to record levels and resulted in a drop in production compared to the previous year."

The company earned around JD6.53 million in total premiums last year. The amount was 14.5 per cent less than the 1996 figure. Car premiums accounted for about 46.5 per cent of the total premiums while life insurance accounted for around 21 per cent. However, net income from the insurance departments amounted to about JD544,300, 23 per cent higher than the 1996 net income.

The company earnings from investments reached JD138,400 compared to JD106,800 in 1996. Mr. Masri attributed the increase to improvement in bank interests and the decline in losses from selling shares.

The net profit after various allocations stood at JD433,000 and the general assembly approved distributing dividends at a rate of 125 fils per share, or 12.5 per cent, which translates into JD143,300. The remaining amount was allocated to the voluntary reserve and the general reserve for JD86,600 and JD75,000 respectively.

The company's balance sheet totalled JD8.32 million at the end of last year which the shareholders' equity increased by JD175,000 to JD1.77 million including JD154,600 of retained earnings.

Total technical reserves stood at around JD2.81 million compared to JD3.08 million in 1996. Investments were estimated at about JD2.76 million of which JD1.43 were the value of share investments.

The total fixed assets of the company amounted to around JD226,500 at the end of last year (Al Aswat).

Red Sea Hotels Company launches major project in Aqaba

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AQABA -- In a bid to promote tourist services at Aqaba, an agreement was signed Thursday between the Red Sea Hotels Company and the Saudi Ben Ladin conglomerate for the construction of a five-star Movenpick Resort in Aqaba and the Ayla Residence for a total of JD25 million.

"The resort will be built in stages to be completed within two years. The first phase for the skeleton work has been awarded to Ben Ladin for JD 4.9 million. Other tenders will be floated in the very near future," said Khalil Talhoumi, chairman of Zara Investment Holding Company and the Red Sea Hotels Company, a subsidiary of Zara.

The Movenpick Resort at Aqaba will be situated at Aqaba's north beach and will stretch across two plots of land. The first plot is parallel to the King Hussein Boulevard and will include the hotel site which will comprise 270 guest rooms. Mr. Talhoumi told the Jordan Times.

The second plot of land is a 200-metre stretch of private beach neighbouring the Royal Yacht Club and the Abbasid Ayla archaeological site.

"The Ayla Residence will embody a condominium of 66 apartments in six buildings in addition to the Movenpick's leisure facilities," said Mr. Talhoumi. The apartments will be sold separately and will be marketed in the near future.

"The apartments of the Ayla Residence will be sold separately and will be marketed in the near future," said Mr. Talhoumi. The apartments will be sold separately and will be marketed in the near future.

"We found that this is the ideal location to start a development project like this; it's adjacent to the archaeological city of Ayla and very close to the Royal Yacht Club," adding that the location is almost in the city centre making it an urban resort catering to

business people and residents as well.

But with the present political climate, Jordan is vulnerable to any political turmoil as it makes many people sceptical of the country's future in tourism. These "negative elements" have delayed the expected tourism boom, said Tourism and Antiquities Minister Akel Bitaji.

The number of tourists in 1997 dropped by 5.5 per cent from the previous year, said the minister, but the increase in the average length of stay compensated for fewer tourists. Ministry of Tourism sources have said that at least four major five-star hotels are currently under construction in Amman at an estimated total cost of JD 100 million.

Jordanian, Arab and foreign investors have invested JD50 million capital in Zara Investment Holding Co. which mainly invests in the hotel and tourism sector and other tourism related services. Zara already has 18 projects under its umbrella.

Such projects include the Movenpick Resort Petra and the Movenpick Resort Dead Sea. The former is in

operation and the latter, which is designed to be more of a village than a hotel, is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

The Zara Investment Co. is developing the Jordan InterContinental Hotel which has been undergoing a "face-lift" and an expansion that are expected to be completed by the end of this year.

Also expected to open this year are the Grand Hyatt Amman and the Zara Dead Sea Spa. Zara also intends to open another five-star resort on Aqaba's south shore.

Seepics perceive new investments in the hotel and tourism sector only leading to an oversupply of rooms in the Kingdom. They feel that rather than constructing five-star hotels, three star ventures are wiser as this is now becoming a global trend.

"At the Movenpick Resort Aqaba we will offer five-star services and standards, but like the Movenpick Petra, our rates will be much lower than a five-star hotel," said Mr. Talhoumi.

He believes that there is no reason why tourism in

the Jordanian side of the Red Sea cannot be developed in the same manner that has been done in Egypt and Eilat. "Our feasibility study has confirmed that there will certainly be an interest in developing such facilities in Aqaba for incoming and local tourism," he emphasised.

Travel is becoming more and more expensive, said Mr. Talhoumi, and hence it becomes more feasible to offer local quality facilities within the resort areas of Jordan at reasonable prices.

Mr. Talhoumi believes that with more and more facilities in Jordan, tourists will be encouraged into coming directly here and spending more time in the country. Jordan's landmarks have been marketed by other countries as part of a package deal commonly known to foreigners under the slogan of "visit Israel and see Petra."

"I feel that despite the political turmoil the area is going through, at the end of the day tourism will flourish when peace comes our way. We have so much to offer in Jordan to make it a destination on its own," concluded Mr. Talhoumi.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.8100	0.6070	0.4642	126.05	1.4208	1782.20	2.0369	6.6844
DE Mark	0.5526	1.0000	0.3352	0.2608	69.56	0.7848	984.37	1.1267	3.3628
GB Sterling	1.6474	2.9830	1.0000	0.7460	207.07	2.3408	2936.71	3.3665	10.0005
CH Franc	0.8830	1.2358	0.4143	1.0000	86.11	0.8857	1217.69	139.38	4.1444
JP Yen	0.0073	0.0133	0.0041	0.0034	1.0000	0.0074	114.14	101.79	3.6028
CA Dollar	0.7038	1.2881	0.4226	0.3123	1.13	1.0000	1241.24	1.4181	4.2184
IT Lira	0.0008	0.0014	0.0005	0.0004	0.0001	0.0001	1.0000	11.43	3.4011
NL Guilder	0.4805	0.8873	0.2873	0.2172	0.174	0.0962	873.87	1.0000	2.9740
FR Franc	0.1648	0.2981	0.0999	0.0747	0.024	0.0240	33.01	33.0100	1.0000

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7505	0.3770	0.3408	0.3027	1.0265	33.9970	3.3970
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2898	0.5317	0.4288	0.4288	1.4104	2168.85	4.7918
Saudi Riyal	0.2686	0.1890	1.0000	0.1005	0.07	0.0612	0.06	407.65	0.8058
Bahrain Dinar	2.50	1.8808	8.9491	1.0000	0.88	0.8880	0.74	4054.70	9.0126
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1947	1.0301	1.0301	1.0000	0.8837	1.01	418.85	0.9332
Kuwait Dinar	3.2830	2.3270	12.3128	12.3128	12.3128	1.0000	12.08	6018.04	0.9332
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212	1.0212	0.9913	0.8828	1.00	410.18	0.9251
Lebanese L1000	0.65	0.4639	2.4537	2.4537	0.1993	2.4028	1.00	2.2227	1.0000
Egyptian	0.2943	0.2087	1.1033	0.1110	1.0710	0.0887	1.0810	448.88	1.0000

Energy			Mid-East Currencies					
Oils	Last	Previous	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
Brent	13.59	13.36	SA Riyal	0.2686	0.4827	0.1618	0.3904	33.6226
M. Texas	15.51	10.38	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4829	0.1628	0.3908	34.3348
Bonny	13.09	10.36	KW Dinar	3.2830	5.9477	1.9824	4.8078	413.907
Dubai	11.62	11.75	BH Dinar	0.3770	0.90307	0.10108	3.8836	334.66
U.L. Gas	167.00	166.00	CY Pound	1.8788	3.4010	1.1403	2.762	235.892

Metal Prices			Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Metal	Bid	Offer	Period Cncy	-1- Month	-3- Months	-6- Months	-9- Months	-1- Year
Gold (oz's)	296.0	297.1	USD	5.60	5.65	5.00	0.81	0.88
Silver (oz's)	6.3	6.34	GBP	7.26	7.41	7.48	7.48	7.48
Platinum (oz's)	382.0	384.5	JPY	1.26	0.48	0.90	0.34	0.84
AL (3 Months)	#N/A	DRPNA DRP	DEM	3.40	3.43	3.83	3.39	3.35
CU (3 Months)	#N/A	DRPNA DRP	FRF	4.03	3.46	3.01	3.52	3.66
Zinc (3 Months)	#N/A	DRPNA DRP	CHF	0.82	0.90	1.03	1.08	1.10
Lead (3 Months)	#N/A	DRPNA DRP	ITL	6.03	5.82	5.56	5.21	5.00
AL(1 Month)	#N/A	DRPNA DRP						

Energy			* JOD Cross Rates		
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Currency	Buy	Sell
Coffee (m/bis)	172.25	Spot	US Dollar	0.706	0.710
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1538	Spot	GB Sterling	1.1613	1.1671
Sugar (\$/ton)	267	Spot	DE Mark	0.3896	0.3910
Wheat (\$/ton)	0	Spot	CH Franc	0.4821	0.4848
Soya (c/bis)	28.48	Spot	JP Franc	0.1102	0.1169
Tea (kg/kg)	190	Spot	JP Yen	0.5906	0.5934
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot	NL Guilder	0.3488	0.3470
Rice (\$/bsh)	400	Spot	IT Lira	0.3948	0.3998

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET														
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN														
TELEPHONE: 481111 / 481174														
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (21/02/1998 - 25/02/1998)														
WEEKLY REPORT														
DURING THE LAST 5 WEEKS														
NO. OF DAYS TRADED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADING VOLUME	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADED SHARES	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
DAILY AVERAGE OF CONTRACTS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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Piotine downs Korda

LONDON (AFP) — Inconsistent Frenchman Cedric Pietline showed his best side here on Thursday to beat World No. 2 Petr Korda of the Czech Republic 6-3, 6-3 in the second round of the ATP tournament — avenging his defeat by the top seed in the fourth round of the Australian Open.

The 30-year-old Korda, who was the fifth seed to fall before the quarter-final, looked a shadow of the player that was so impressive in winning his first Grand Slam last month when he took the Australian Open beating Slovakian Karol Kucera. Pietline, last year's beaten Wimbledon finalist and ranked 18th in the world, took only 77 minutes to dispose of Korda serving and volleying so well he gave the Czech little chance to get into the match.

Korda, whose wife is expecting a child in June, was generous in defeat. "He volleyed so well that it was very difficult for me to pass him. I had two break points in the seventh game — maybe the score would have been different if I had won that game," Korda said.

Korda admitted later he has been suffering from



Frenchman Cedric Pietline hits a forehand to top seed Petr Korda of the Czech Republic during their match the ATP Tour event at Battersea Park. Pietline upset the world No. 2 6-3 6-3 to advance to the next round (Reuters photo)

back trouble since the Australian Open and is returning to Prague to see his doctor before deciding whether to play in the Rotterdam tournament next week.

Tim Henman's comeback continued — but only after another nail-biting contest against 21-year-old German Rainer Schuttler.

Henman, who lost in Split just three weeks ago to little-known Schuttler, ranked a modest 118th in the world, finally scored a 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 win to keep the home flag flying after the first-round defeat of Greg Rusedski and the loss earlier Thursday of Andrew Richardson to Marc-Kevin Goellner.

West Asian Zone basketball qualifiers Lebanon's Riyadi beat Jazireh, qualify to Asian Clubs Championship

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Lebanon's Al Riyadi Friday clinched the sole qualifying berth to next month's Asian Clubs Championship when they beat Jordan's Al Jazireh 87-77 in the last match of the five-team West Asian Zone basketball qualifiers.

Both teams had maintained an unbeaten streak throughout their matches and a win was essential to become the zone's representative in the Asian championship in Malaysia April 25-May 2.

Al Riyadi set the pace and led throughout the match leading 50-40 at halftime.

Cheered on by over 3,500 fans, the hosts seemed to be making a comeback and cut the gap to two points in the second half.

They were however outscored 15-4 between the 13th and 16th minutes of the second half as Al Riyadi built a big lead of 81-65 led by playmaker Walid Dimiani and centre Michael Cumberland.

Al Jazireh who had upset Syria's Al Wihdeh 90-81 and beat Iranian champions Zobohan 68-56 seemed but a shadow of the team that had impressed fans and offi-

cials alike throughout the event.

Usual top scorers Hassan Lafti and Ma'as Odeh lacked the finishing and were hampered in rebounding as teammate Yousef Abu Bakr carried the team sided by Nasser Alawneh in scoring.

Al Riyadi led 12-5, and 20-11 before Al Jazireh tried to close the gap to 20-17 only to see that slip away again as the Lebanese champions had a 13-3 run that gave them a 33-20 lead midway through the first half.

With Odeh carrying three fouls, Al Jazireh's shorter players were no match for the 2.2 metre Americans on the Lebanese lineup who blocked many of Al Jazireh's shots under the basket especially Chad Scott.

Al Riyadi led 43-28 before Al Jazireh took advantage of a series of turnovers and scored to trail 44-37. Halftime showed the Lebanese leading 50-40.

At the beginning of the second half, Al Jazireh's Lafti scored to close the gap to within two points with Al Riyadi leading 56-54.

However, Al Jazireh's shots seemed to lack accuracy and with their usual rebounders and scorers ineffective substitutes

Standings (excluding Friday's late match)

	P	W	L	SP	SA	Pts	qualify
Al Riyadi	4	4	0	379	309	8	
Al Wihdeh	4	3	1	381	226	7	
Al Jazireh	4	1	3	304	232	4	
Al Zobohan	3	1	2	261	208	4	
Al Syria	4	0	4	379	450	4	

Ra'ed Geshet, Ihab Qaddoumi and Ala' Bilbeisi gave it their best but Al Riyadi went on to lead 72-61 and 81-65.

Bilbeisi and Abu Bakr scored to narrow the gap from 84-68 to end the match with a 10-point difference.

Al Jazireh thus finished second in the five-team event. Third place was to be decided after Friday's late match between Al Wihdeh and Zobohan.

Al Riyadi had needed overtime to overcome Al Wihdeh 97-95 and had beat Zobohan 89-80.

Yemen's Al Mina' lost all their matches but their team official described it as "a fruitful participation to gain experience."

In other results, Zobohan beat Mina' 125-51. Al Jazireh also had no trouble beating Al Mina' 96-26. Al Mina' also lost 128-45 to Wihdeh and 101-57 to Riyadi.

Al Jazireh Aramex, the

Kingdom's reigning champions hosted the Feb. 23-27 event amid preparations to retain the Kingdom's title which they won last year ending a 30-year domination by rivals Orthodoxi and Al Ahli.

Four referees from the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) officiated the tourney televised live on JTV and Future TV of Lebanon.

The Asian Clubs Championship will include 10 defending Asian teams: the top four from the last championship, one each from the ABC's five zones and the host nation.

The ABC five zones are: Middle Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia and the Gulf.

Aramex was the sole sponsor of the tourney at an estimated cost of JD20,000 and the company

announced that hosting the qualifiers in Amman were part of celebrations marking Aramex's 15 years of operation.

Al Orthodoxi and Al Ahli had previously taken part in the Asian Clubs championship with Al Ahli securing the best Jordanian showing with a fourth place finish in 1995.

Al Jazireh won the Kingdom's basketball crown in 1997 leaving traditional rivals Al Ahli in second place and Al Orthodoxi third.

Al Orthodoxi had an undisputed reign from 1976-1989. Al Ahli won the title in 1990, 1992, 1993 and 1994 while Al Orthodoxi came back to win in 1995 and 1996 and are currently preparing to get back the title.

Chavez sets sights on regaining title

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Julio Cesar Chavez isn't yet ready to give up his role as Mexico's premier boxing hero.

Chavez, winner of six world titles in three different weights, fights compatriot Miguel Angel Gonzalez in Mexico City on March 7 for the vacant World Boxing Council super-lightweight crown.

For the 35-year-old former champion, a victory over Gonzalez would be more than another title — it would be another chance to end his

career with a shot at U.S. "Golden Boy" Oscar de la Hoya.

"There is very little time left for me to demonstrate my worth in the ring," said Chavez, who lost his WBC super lightweight title to de la Hoya on June 7, 1996 in Las Vegas.

For that reason, he said, he has trained longer and harder for the Gonzalez bout than he has in years.

"I'm going into a tough fight. On March 7 I'll have to use all my intelligence, everything I've learned over

the last 18 years. On March 7 you will be surprised. You will see a Chavez at 100 percent. When I'm fully prepared, I'm very hard to beat."

Gonzalez, a former world lightweight champion, was confident, but more subdued. No wonder, since a victory in this fight would give him a coveted title, but make him reviled by many Chavez-worshipping Mexican fans.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Planning announces changing its telephone and Fax number into 7-digit numbers beginning with (4) to become as follows on Saturday evening 28/2/1998:

The old No.

The New No.

644466
644381
649341 (Fax)

464-4466
464-4381
464-9341



ARAB CENTRE FOR HEART AND SPECIAL SURGERY

announces that their phone and fax numbers have changed as follows:

Tel. No.: 5921199
Fax No.: 5921282

شركة الاتصالات الأردنية JORDAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY

Changing telephone numbers in Amman Central Area

JTC announces that at midnight February 28, 1998 all telephone numbers connected to Amman Central Exchanges which begin with

61, 62, 63, 64, 65

will be changed to (7) digits by adding NO (4) to the left of the existing telephone number

Note

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VACANCY

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Applicants are required to have a secondary education and extensive experience in the use of computer technology; a university degree with formalized training in the information field is desirable.

Only qualified applicants should submit an application form (available at the Embassy gate) to the Personnel Office prior to March 12, 1998.

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ATP Tour

Piotine (Fra) bt Petr Korda (Cze)

Goellner (Ger) bt Andre

(Gbr) 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 7-5

Rafter (Aus x2) bt Mogg

(Swe) 6-3, 7-6 (8/6)

man (Gbr) bt Rainer Schuttler

4

Kucera (Slo x7) bt Filip Dewulf

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Israel, Palestinians divided on results of airport talks

RAFAH (AFP) — Israel said on Friday that slight progress was made at high-level talks with the Palestinians on key issues under interim peace accords, but the Palestinian side said differences remained.

The meeting, which focused on the long-delayed opening of an airport in the Gaza Strip, came amid reports that the United States wants to monitor progress in direct talks before presenting any new initiatives to revive fully-fledged negotiations.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who

met Palestinian number two Mahmoud Abbas for more than two hours, said "there was slight progress" and that some points were resolved, although he did not elaborate.

"We're on the right path," he said, adding that there would be further meetings between Israeli and Palestinian officials next week.

"There was understanding between both sides. The Palestinian side has shown understanding for our security demands," he said.

Opening of the Gaza airport has been held up because of disagreement

over Israel's insistence it have a say in security at the airport, which it fears may be used by terrorists or to ship weapons.

But Mr. Abbas was more pessimistic.

"There are still many issues where there are differences," he told reporters after the meeting at Rafah on the site of the planned airport.

"We have agreed that the special committees [on implementing the accords] will hold other meetings in order to bridge the gap," he said, adding: "The gap

(Continued on page 7)

Census finds Palestinians grown to almost 3 million

RAMALLAH (AP) — The Palestinian population in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab east Jerusalem has grown to almost three million, strengthening the Palestinians' claim to an independent state of their own, a Palestinian official said Thursday.

"This should be an eye-opener," said Palestinian Cabinet Minister Hanan Ashrawi, after preliminary results of a Palestinian census done three months ago found 2.88 million Palestinians — more than 40 per cent higher than previous Israeli estimates.

She said the figure under-

scored the need of Israel itself — with only five million Jews — to separate itself from the Palestinians, and noted that Israel's Labour Party that launched peace talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was motivated by the demographic dimension to accept separation and ultimately a two-state solution.

If the current rightist Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "continues to blur the divide and make the possibility of the two-state solution impossible, then demographics will take

over," Ms. Ashrawi said. Thursday's announcement of the preliminary figures had been held up by a month of political wrangling. Some Palestinian politicians had demanded the figures be checked again because the population of the Gaza Strip was unexpectedly low.

Others sought to have the census give a total of Palestinians with "refugee status," meaning they had left homes in Israel proper, rather than the lower number of those still living in camps.

(Continued on page 7)

Mossad mishap shows weakness of Israel's military censorship

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The key role played by the Israeli media in revealing the latest Mossad fiasco illustrates the impotence of the military censor, once an all-powerful institution, analysts said Friday.

The Swiss government kept its arrest of a Mossad agent during a hugging operation under wraps for a week until leaks apparently from the heart of the secret service put the affair on Israel's front-pages despite efforts to suppress the news.

"[News organisations] are more daring, and they are stronger than the censorship itself," said Saul Zadka, journalism professor at Tel Aviv's Bar-Ilan University.

Israel's private television station Channel 2 on Thursday walked out of the Editors Committee, which brings together media directors and defence officials, enabling the security apparatus to control information.

Nathan Shai, chairman of the Second Television and Radio Authority which runs Channel 2, said he believed the committee could no longer justify its existence.

"The Editors Committee was originally formed to maintain military censorship voluntarily, back in the days when there was only print media," said Mr. Shai, himself a former army spokesman.

"But we live in a new era

Israeli military commander tipped as new Mossad boss

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli military commander who led the Grapes of Wrath offensive in Lebanon two years ago was being tipped Friday as the next chief of Mossad, which is reeling from a series of botched operations.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hopes to present the choice of Major General Amir Levine to the Israeli cabinet for confirmation on Sunday, the Haaretz newspaper reported.

Maj. Gen. Levine, 51, has been head of Israel's Northern Command covering operations in south Lebanon, where Israel occupies a self-declared "security zone" to protect

its northern border from attack by Islamist guerrillas.

He led the Grapes of Wrath offensive in April 1996 against the Hizbollah guerrilla movement, in which 175 people, mostly civilians were killed.

That offensive included the massacre of 105 civilians killed in Israeli shelling of a U.N. compound in Cana.

Mr. Netanyahu has been looking for a new commander for Mossad since the resignation Tuesday of General Danny Yatom following a string of embarrassing incidents involving the once-revered spy

(Continued on page 7)

of fierce competition and broadcast news along with print.

The Channel 2 walkout followed a meeting between Mossad chief Danny Yatom and the committee Wednesday during which he requested the media refrain from publishing details of the Swiss affair to try to assist the captured Mossad agent.

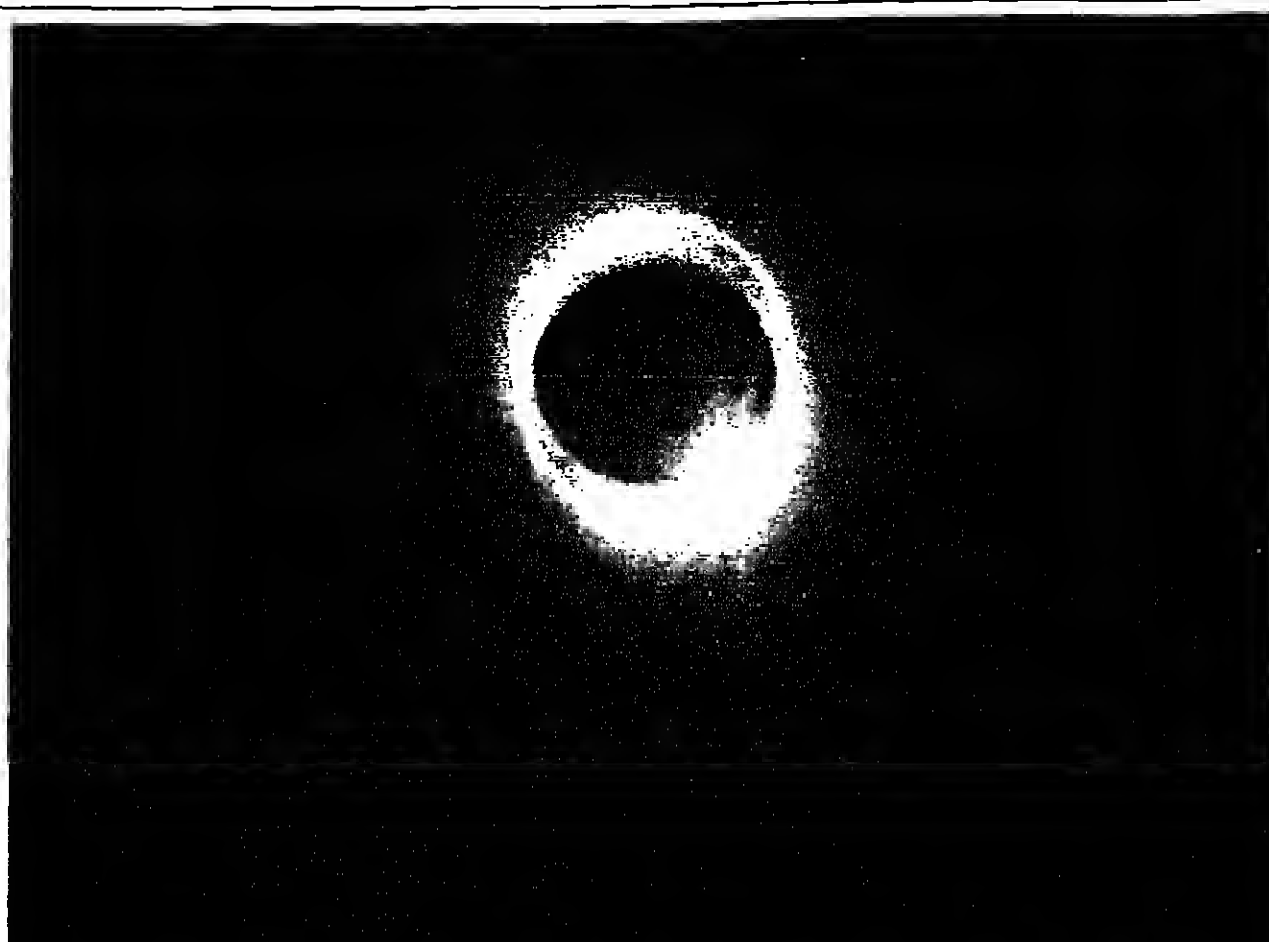
Legally, any information affecting the security of Israel, including reports by

foreign correspondents, must be submitted to army censors before publication.

Under the law it is even forbidden to say that censorship exists.

But in practice, military censorship is only applied to specific subjects such as military operations underway, immigration of Jews from "hostile" countries and above all, Israel's nuclear arsenal.

(Continued on page 7)



LAST TOTAL ECLIPSE OF CENTURY: A total solar eclipse is seen above El Pico in Punto Fijo, Venezuela, Thursday. Parts of northern Venezuela, northern Colombia and the Caribbean witnessed the Western Hemisphere's last total solar eclipse of the century (AP Photo)

Garaudy fined for book playing down Nazi gas chambers

PARIS (AFP) — Controversial French writer Roger Garaudy was sentenced by a court Friday to pay 120,000 francs (\$20,000) in fines for a book playing down the Nazi extermination of the Jews in World War II.

Mr. Garaudy had been charged with denying crimes against humanity for his 1996 book "Founding Myths of Israeli Policy" and faced a one-year jail term and a 300,000-franc fine.

The 84-year-old writer, a former Communist who has converted to Islam, won wide support across the Islamic World in his face-off with French law over the book. He was not in court for the verdict.

Only this week, Iran asked France to acquit the author saying he was being tried as a result "of the influence and tendentious aims of Zionist circles."

Handing down its sentence in a courtroom cordoned off by

police because of the presence outside of Jewish protesters, the court convicted Mr. Garaudy of "challenging crimes against humanity" and of "racial libel" but cleared him of charges of "provoking racial hatred, discrimination or violence."

At his hearing last month, Mr. Garaudy said his book in no way condoned Nazi methods but was an attack instead on Israeli government policy.

"I challenge anyone to find the word 'Jew' used pejoratively anywhere in my book," Mr. Garaudy told the court. "What I am criticising is a policy."

But the court said the book went further than a criticism of state policy and "questions all Jews not only Israel."

It added that "far from merely criticising Zionism, Roger Garaudy embarked on a virulent and systematic questioning of crimes against humanity against the Jewish community."

He was fined 20,000 francs for racial libel for statements on the so-called "Shoah business," 50,000 francs for denying crimes against humanity, 30,000 francs for querying the Nazi policy of exterminating the Jews and for questioning the number of people killed in the gas chambers and 20,000 francs for anti-Semitism.

Since the publication of the book, Mr. Garaudy has emerged as something of a hero in much of the Islamic World, symbolising the gap of incomprehension between it and the West.

From Tehran to Damascus and Cairo to Khartoum, petitions of support and cries of condemnation have poured in, turning the writer into a Muslim "cause célèbre."

In France, the top Jewish organisation CRIF issued a statement "bitterly regretting the silence of enlightened Islamic intellectuals and leaders" on the Garaudy case.

"The current political mood is partly responsible," said Islam-watcher Olivier Roy. "Five years ago he might not have had so much backing in the Arab World."

"I believe the immense support for him is linked to the breakdown of the Middle East peace process, it's an expression of what is currently being perceived in the Arab World as Western double standards," he told AFP in an interview this week.

"The West is seen as presenting a diabolical picture of the Arab World, notably through its depiction of [Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein, while it remains totally indulgent towards [Israeli Premier] Benjamin Netanyahu," Mr. Roy said.

Arab bodies, from bar associations to writers' groups and newspapers, rose up to decry the Mr. Garaudy case as a vio

(Continued on page 7)

U.N. rights boss to raise concerns in Iran

GENEVA (R) — Mary Robinson, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, will raise concerns about rights issues in Iran during talks with top officials this weekend, a spokesman said on Friday.

Ms. Robinson has received a pledge from Tehran that the U.N. special rapporteur (investigator) on human rights in Iran, Canadian jurist Maurice Copithorne, will be allowed to visit in May or June, spokesman John Mills said.

Her visit comes two weeks before the annual U.N. Human Rights Commission, whose 53 member states sharply criticised Iran last year for continuing violations including a "large number of executions" and cases of torture.

Ms. Robinson is expected to meet Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi on Saturday and Iranian President Mohammad Khatami on Sunday.

World Court declares jurisdiction in Lockerbie dispute with Libya

THE HAGUE (AP) — The World Court ruled Friday it has authority to settle a bitter legal dispute that has blocked the trial of two Libyans suspected of blowing up a Pan Am jumbo jet over Scotland in 1988.

The United Nations' highest judicial body declared jurisdiction in the case pitting Libya against the United States and Britain, still fighting for a trial nine years after a suitcase bomb killed 270 people in the air and on the ground in Lockerbie.

The ruling that the case was admissible was a boost for some relatives of the victims of Flight 103. But the decision did not settle the judicial deadlock and a trial could still be years away.

The 15 justices announced their authority to wade into the affair in a ruling on Britain's case before the

court. They were still ruling Friday on a separate but nearly identical case brought by the U.S.

The U.S. and Britain both want to try the men on their soil, while Libya claims a 1971 civil aviation convention gives it the right to carry out any trial. Authorities in Tripoli insist the men are innocent.

The North African nation also asked the court formally known as the International Court of Justice, to lift U.N. Security Council sanctions aimed at forcing the suspects' extradition.

The U.S. government had argued that the World Court has no power to overturn a Security Council decision and should pull out of the case.

Relatives who lost loved ones when the bomb shredded the plane over Lockerbie on Dec. 21,

1988, have grown increasingly impatient over the setbacks that so far have blocked a trial.

Jim Squire, who lost his daughter Flora in the explosion and who now represents a group of British relatives of victims, had warned that a court decision not to take the case would have been "the latest slap in the face for our search for truth and justice."

Most British relatives have come to accept the idea of a trial in a third neutral country as a compromise, but many U.S. relatives continue to insist the suspects must be tried in Britain or the United States.

There was no immediate reaction from Libya to Friday's ruling. The World Court has no authority to enforce its decisions and relies on nations' voluntary compliance.

'Waving the stick of military action against Iraq has helped reach a solution to crisis'

By Francesca Ciriaci
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — World leaders and Middle East experts seem to agree that the heavy deployment of U.S. troops and military equipment in the Gulf was a "conditio sine qua non" for the diplomatic solution to the latest U.N.-Iraq standoff over weapons inspections.

In line with various containment and retaliation doctrines that have characterised Western strategies throughout the cold war's years, many point out that U.S. military threats played a major role in supporting the diplomatic effort because they were "credible."

Two thousands years down the road, Augustus' motto "si vis pacem, para bellum." ("If you want peace, prepare for the war") was once again reasserted.

Since the beginning of the crisis, His Majesty King Hussein did not spare efforts to warn the Iraqi leadership that the standoff was indeed escalating and that the possibility of military confrontation was real.

In his open letter to Crown Prince Hassan from London, on Jan. 31, King Hussein warned Iraqi President Saddam Hussein that the U.S. considered "subliminalism in responding to the U.N. Security Council's requests" as "an

extremely serious miscalculation...[that] would move the situation towards an explosion."

He warned the Iraqi leaders not to "bet on the possibility of a division in the [U.N.] Security Council [that would] prevent the use of force, or... think that the current situation was a bluff or a manoeuvre."

In an interview with Newsweek magazine two weeks ago, Crown Prince Hassan asserted the importance of the use of the "stick," when "it comes with the carrot" of diplomatic options.

"I do not think the elite are saying the U.N. is to be blamed for irresponsible actions in threatening the

use of force," Prince Hassan said.

"However, I think that the threat of force should be used as a stick which you wave, but you do not necessarily beat Iraqis with."

U.S. veteran foreign service officer Ambassador David Newton, underlined the role played by the massive deployment of naval, land and air forces in the Gulf, and especially in Kuwait, in securing the success of U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's last-ditch mission to Baghdad and convincing Iraq to grant free and full access to presidential sites to U.N. arms inspectors.

"Of course, people are naturally reluctant to see

forces being deployed, but they should understand that the solution must be a genuine one, and that Iraq must comply with U.N. resolutions," Mr. Newton, who has served in the Middle East since 1970 in different capacities, including as ambassador to Iraq and Yemen, told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

"I do not think the [U.N.] secretary general could have accomplished what he did unless the [military] threat was credible."

Mr. Newton added that "U.S. forces will stay in the region as long as there is a need to protect Iraq's neighbours," but declined to elaborate any further.

French President

Jacques Chirac, whose country led efforts to achieve a diplomatic solution to the U.N.-Iraq crisis, admitted that "alone, we would not have succeeded."

In an interview with the French daily "Le Monde" obtained by the Jordan Times on Friday, Mr. Chirac said: "In reality, it is the mobilisation of the American military apparatus and the mobilisation of the diplomatic apparatus... which, together, have made it possible to find a solution avoiding a strike, the consequences of which would have been very heavy."

"It would have been the end of UNSCOM [the U.N. Special Commission

in charge of monitoring and destroying Iraq's presumed arsenal of weapons of mass destruction] and thus the end of monitoring. It would, therefore, have been the door open for Iraq to develop once again weapons of mass destruction."

The French president also said that military strikes against Baghdad would have provoked the departure of all U.N. staff even including those who ensure the management of humanitarian aid.

"Such a turn of events would have nurtured a very strong condemnation of the West first from the Arab and Muslim peoples."

"I insist mobilisation of

U.S. military means and the mobilisation of the diplomatic means... have allowed the success of the mission carried out by Mr. Annan, to whom I pay tribute," Mr. Chirac said in the interview, summarising the successful formula which defused the crisis as "firmness and openness."

Upon his return from his four-day mission to Baghdad, on Feb. 24, Mr. Annan himself credited the military might assembled by the U.S. and its allies in the region with helping make the agreement possible.

"The best way to use force is to show it in order not to use it," Mr. Annan was quoted by the international press as saying.

Mir crew miss solar eclipse

CAPE CANAVERAL (R) — Sailing through space 386 km from earth, the U.S.-Russian crew aboard space station Mir missed out on the celestial event of the year. A solar eclipse, the last that will be visible from the Western hemisphere this millennium, was blocked from view by the earth. U.S. astronaut Andrew Thomas said, "When it was happening we were basically on the other side of the planet." Thomas said on Thursday in a televised news conference beamed from space, "I couldn't see anything, which is rather unfortunate. It would have been fun."

Love blossoms in cyberspace for Irish-American couple

DUBLIN (AFP) — Love has blossomed in cyberspace for an Irishman and an American woman who met and courted on the Internet using pseudonyms before he proposed in a "chat-room" without ever seeing her. Geremy Farrell, 23, from County Kildare, a hotel conference coordinator, and Julia McHaley, 18, a sales supervisor from Salt Lake City, Utah, plan to marry on June 17 next year. McHaley has now moved to Ireland — saving them huge phone bills. The couple both used an Internet chat room called Whiskey Chaser. He called the name Lord Keldar — drawn from a science fiction book — and she was Roserain.

Swiss give green light to red-light business

ZURICH (R) — Switzerland's first legal brothel opened in Zurich on Wednesday, applying the country's Protestant work ethic to the world's oldest profession. Thirty self-employed prostitutes set up shop at the Petite Fleur boulevard a stone's throw from Lake Zurich, according to press reports. "The women can pursue their profession without pimps," founder and lawyer Valentin Landmann told one newspaper. "The basic idea for this bordel was to allow prostitutes to work entirely legally along free-market lines." The brothel was the brainchild of Landmann and carpenter Hans Berchtold, who personally made most of the furniture and beds from beech wood.

Penguins' secret life of 'vice' revealed

LONDON (AFP) — The shocking truth about Antarctic penguins' secret life of "vice" was exposed in the British press Thursday in reports detailing how female birds run a sophisticated prostitution racket. Scientists on Ross Island, 800-kilometre from the South Pole, told the journal Auk, how they had observed male penguins pay for sex with stones and rocks. The pebbles, which are needed for nest platforms, can become extremely scarce and penguins which steal stones risk attack. "Females have figured out that one way to steal the stones without being attacked is to swap copulations for them," one researcher was quoted as saying.

Danish nurses drop white overalls

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — Training nurses in southeast Denmark won the right to drop their transparent and downriden white overalls and wear a stricter trouser suit, a specialised review reported. Interns had been protesting the obligation to wear the overall for years, claiming that with "the traditional white coats, they were treated like sex objects," by the male staff and patients, the magazine Sykeplejers reported. "The overalls are not only transparent, but often full of holes," a trainee, Bettina Jacobsen, was quoted as saying.